



生まれ変わった俺は  
**自動販売機に**

**迷宮を**  
彷徨う

**3**

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# **I Reincarnated Into a Vending Machine**

— Jidouhanbaiki ni Umarekawatta Ore wa Meikyuu ni Samayou —

**- Volume 3 -**

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**[ Hon'yaku ]**

# Chapter 48

## The Maze Level's Community

For the me that was lost, the sensation of being carried on Ramis' back is, honestly, if you ask me, this spot really does calm me down.

We're within the transfer circle placed in the Maze Level to return to the direction of the community, but there is quite the large family here, na.

Ramis with Hyurumi. President Bear. The gatekeepers. The Fools of Whimsy Brigade with Leader Keryoil, Vice-Leader Filmina, the archer Shui, the red-white twins Red and White. Formerly the Demons of Gluttony Brigade, the Big Eaters Brigade's Mikene, Pel, Suko, Shote.

All members said, it's 14 persons and 1 box.

From now on, we're going to stay in the Maze Level's community for a little while, and then return to Seiryu Lake Level, it seems. They're going to trace the map of the Maze Level that I displayed with detail, and work on recording the places like where traps are deployed, so I'm going to help out some.

You will be able to avoid the Maze Level's convoluted paths and the vicious traps, so for the Hunters Association, even if it's just a little bit, in order to raise the survivability, they won't spare any effort, it seems.

Until that settles down, the Maze Level's community will become my temporary residence.

The place and the activation conditions of the traps in the Maze's main pathway has already pretty much been investigated, so although monsters sometimes appear, they are easily repulsed.

Particularly, without any of those so-called accidents, we reached the mouth of the Maze after two days.

At the entrance there isn't anything like a gate, nor are there any existences like gatekeepers. Going forward a bit from where we broke out of the maze, I begin to see buildings here and there, but how do I say this; it's a bit of a sad sight.

Past the Maze's walls outside was desolate ground spread out; there wasn't even a

single weed sprouting.

The buildings too are just logs combined together, the log-cabin style houses, and rocks piled in square bungalows dotted here and there, and there's not a protective fence surrounding it... I wonder what they do for monster attacks.

"This place is pretty dreary, *ne*. Don't you think, Hakkon?"

"Welcome."

"Yeah, I know. I wonder why it's in decline without any life in it."

"Ramis, ya don't know? This Maze Level here's got huge losses and dangers, but it be a place where that be offset with the expectations for the payout. The deathrate is weirdly high, but there also be Hunters that got their hands on the type of money ya can't use up in your entire life."

I heard that from each and every one of the members of the Big Eaters Brigade.

"It be that kinda place, so the company that comes to it gonna be the experienced guys with skill, or the ones who ain't competent, the fools who dream of makin' it big; those two types."

There's no particular meaning to it, but my line of sight unintentionally switched over to the Big Eaters Brigade. Looks like those four are getting along while marching and conversing.

"Hunters aren't recklessly coming, but the Hunters Association's gotta send out the bare minimum personnel to preserve the transfer circle. Even if ya say there ain't much people, without institutions like an inn and eatery, it gonna be inconvenient, *na*. 'Cause of that, there ain't anything other than the Hunters Association, inn-and-eatery, weapons and armor shop, and a tool shop, about."

"So it's like that; Hyurumi's so well-informed, *ne*. A, but, there's no protective fence going around the perimeter of the community; what about that?"

"Seems like, for some reason, monsters don't set one foot outside of the Maze. And, outside the Maze there this barren land that ain't got even one living thing out here. It at the extent ya don't need the walls."

“For the Association’s part, we’d like to see a few more Hunters drop in to this Level, na. This is one of the places we’re struggling that I’m dealing with this time. Thanks to Hakkon’s map, I can see the potential; I thank you.”

The one who cut into the discussion was the Bear President. Because he was somehow keeping close and straining his ears so they stood up, he was able to pick his timing to mix into the conversation.

“There are far too many things we do not understand nearly enough about regarding dungeons to this day<sup>1</sup>. If we do not have some personnel claiming each and every level, by the time we realize abnormalities it would be too late, when we begin to take action will already be too late; we must be able to avoid that so-called worst case scenario. In particular, this time’s Level Ruler revival was a repeated occurrence. Whatever the case, it can’t help but give off a bad premonition.”

There are all sorts of things I don’t know about this world. For this me to encounter two Level Rulers in such a short time, this is something that is probably unbelievable normally.

“I will be having you accompany me for several days for the map production, but let us pay separately for that view from above.”

If it’s that I won’t have any complaints. No, well originally I didn’t have any intention to complain, though. For me, I was plenty happy just that you came with Ramis together to rescue me. Even if that was also for your self interest.

Even so, to receive an additional reward, honestly I don’t know what to think about it, but with the other party proposing it and me without the ability to skillfully turn it down, let’s just stay quiet and receive it.

With that kind of conversation continuing, all members’ feet suddenly stop. So this here is our objective, the Maze Level community’s Hunters Association.

It’s different from Seiryu Lake’s Level; it’s appearance is way too small, and I can’t see it as anything other than being converted from a two-story private house. If you say it politely, it’s a commoner’s taste; poorly speaking... you didn’t have enough money, naa.

When you open the double doors and enter inside, by the wall there’s a counter, there’s

two round tables, and several chairs. Aside from that there's one bookshelf. That is all the furniture in this room.

Facing the counter there are two women who seem like personnel, but other than that there's no one at all. Before we arrived was there too much extra time; one party is reading, and the other is nodding off.

"E-, a, President Bomi, you returned quite quickly. Have you already found him?"

She took her hand away from the book quickly; in a panic she stood and bowed her head towards the Bear President.

At her voice the other one nodding off also woke, and turning her head from side to side she surveyed her surroundings, and then, like the colleague next to her, she bowed her head.

But you know, the Bear President is called President Bomi. It doesn't really suit him, so within my heart I will continue to call him Bear President.

"Kesha, Uriwa. I understand there's a lot of down time, but please be a little more alert."

"M,my apologies."

The receptionist woman who was reading has a three-strand braid and black glasses; Kesha. The other one who was nodding off would be Uriwa, na. She has a short haircut and as an athletic feeling.

"The Maze Level President is above?"

"Yes. He's in."

"Then, Leade, Vice-Leader, Hyurumi, and then... let's have Mikene come to be on the safe side. As for the others, please take it easy here."

Ramis set me up in a corner of the hall. It's been a while since I spent time in a place with a roof.

If it's a break, then it's the time for the vending machine to shine. I've gotten a good

understanding on what products all the members like, so I slyly lined them up. They've come to buy them so many times before, so with practiced motions they purchased products one after another. When they finished their purchases, they set them on top of the round tables and relaxed.

"U,um, what is that?"

The two receptionists had come closer before I knew it; without trying to hide their curiosity, they began talking with all the members of the Fools of Whimsy Brigade.

"N-, A-, about Hakkon. Uuum, it's a wonderful, mysterious magic tool where you put in coins, select your product and buy it. The taste is exquisite and you can eat your fill, so I suuuuper recommend it."

As expected, of the most excellent person of the Fools of Whimsy Brigade, Shui. Thank you for the standard praise.

Seeing everyone eating like it's delicious, a gulp sounded from the two receptionists' throats.

"Guess I'll try and buy. We're always just eating at the eatery."

"That's true. It's not like the flavor is bad, but I'm tired of it, ne..."

Since this community only has the one inn-and-eatery, na. Of course you'd get tired of it. Come to think of it, I wonder if the management of the inn-and-eatery is holding up. It's likely that it's actually being supported by the Hunters Association or something like that.

After investigating the other peoples' products they bought, for the black glasses it's milk tea and canned oden. The other party bought corn soup and cup ramen.

Smelling the scent and poking the can with their fingers, they ascertained this and that until they had reached some kind of understanding about it for the moment. Nervously, they sipped it, and then their eyes opened wide.

"A, it's more delicious than I thought it would be!"

"What is this, the feeling of it going down your throat is also good; this sweetness is something I think I can get addicted to."



I'll take that high evaluation. Looks like I got some new customers; let's check my points while I'm waiting. Won't the points have further increased after defeating the two Level Rulers?

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### **Vending Machine Hakkon Rank 2**

Endurance: 200/200

Durability:50

Strength: 0

Speed: 20

Dexterity: 0

Magic: 0

PT: 517,654

### **Functions:**

Refrigeration, Heat Insulation, Omni-directional Sight, Hot Water Dispenser, Cup Ramen Support Mode, 2 Liter Support Mode, Rod-Shaped Candy Dispenser, Coating Change, Boxed Product Support, Vending Machine Security Camera, Solar Panel, Wheels, Electronic BBS, LCD Display, Oxygen Vending Machine, Magazine Vending Machine, Ice Vending Machine, Dry Ice Vending Machine, Natural Gas Vending Machine, Balloon Vending Machine, Vegetable Vending Machine, Egg Vending Machine, Cardboard Vending Machine, Coin-Operated Vacuum, Power Washer

### **Divine Gift:**

Barrier

### **Possessions:**

The Coin of the Eight-Legged Alligator

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How do I say this, the <Functions> have increased too much; I'm not really sure what kind of existence I am anymore, na. Most of the functions are useful and I've used them, but the Electronic BBS is a miss, I guess. If you could choose the words freely, and if you could choose the sound based on the words freely; it didn't match up to my imagination.

One day I might be able to think of a different way to use it, so let's not forget about it.

Aside from that, Endurance and Durability are raised quite high, but with this I'm not able to get an actual feeling for how hard that is.

Ramis' running jump and body blow's damage goes through, but I understand that it's



because of her super strength. I'd like to try and take a normally strong opponents attack once, but will there ever be an opportunity where it could happen?

Now then, it's about the beloved points, but 510,000, huh? When I defeated the eight-legged alligator I got close to 1,000,000 points, but this time it increased by about 500,000. Is this because Flame-Big-Bone-Demon just has fewer points than the eight-legged alligator, or is it because this time, before I finished it off, it accumulated some damage; I'm agonizing over the possibilities.

Whatever the case, it's only certain that I don't have enough for 1,000,000 points. If I had reached 1,000,000 points this time, then this time I definitely would choose a Divine Blessing. Yep.

I will keep the lost hope secret in my chest; being in an environment that's not exposed to the wind and rain, my tension loosened suddenly; for the first time since I fell to the Maze Level, I choose to sleep.

# Chapter 49

## Not Quite the Ideal Hero

After coming to the Maze Level, the new regulars have increased. The couple that runs the weapon-armor shop and the parent and child that run the inn, the Hunter Association receptionists; these are the residents from here that come pretty much every day to buy, it seems.

Or like, the number of this level's residents is way too few. Even if you say it's not a popular level, with 10 people in total then their commerce should be doomed. This is just an outsider's unneeded worry, but when Ramis, who harbored the same question as me, questioned the receptionists, the mystery was solved.

Actually, my expectations were right on the mark; looks like a fixed sum of money is paid by the Hunter Association every month. In other words, even if customers don't come at all, they are guaranteed income to the degree that they can live off of it.

If that's the case, then that changes the issue. If you can get money even if you don't work hard, I bet there's a lot of people who would tolerate even these circumstances.

That said, although idle time is welcome to some degree, with this kind of extremely long time period, if you're at all a person who works diligently, it seems like it would be excruciating and you'd feel uneasy.

Even so, sometimes a Hunter will drop in, and they'd be so grateful they'd be so hospitable that it's weird; that's one funny part of it.

This time, since we're staying for a long period of time, the residents' faces are overflowing with animation, and their excitement has gone up.

Since we've reached the community, three days have passed, and the Fools of Whimsy Brigade began looking towards the preparations for other levels; after they finish gathering information they'll come and invite us, they said.

It seems that if the Bear President doesn't return to the Seiryu Lake Community soon there would be all sorts of problems, so he returned first.

Right now the ones who will remain are Ramis, Hyurumi, and all the members of the Big Eater Brigade, who have taken a request from the Bear President so they are unable to leave. Seems like they'll be carrying it out tomorrow so each of them are making their preparations, when unusually, another Hunter came to this level.

Clad in full-body armor that had a jet black surface that was frightfully glossy and looked like it was wet, a single blond haired, blue-eyed, androgynous young man dropped into the Hunter Association.

Fair and slender long arms and legs, on his back a greatsword in addition to the jet black armor. How do I say it; it's almost like he's the ideals of women all stuffed together; to the him that looks like he was extracted out of a certain game that boasts super-beautiful CG clips, the receptionists' gazes were concentrated on him.

"Excuse me. Today, even though I just arrived on this level, do you have a detailed map of the maze?"

His manner is also gentle, and his voice is also clear. Right now I can't find any faults. Although being a vending machine yet having jealousy is a strange thing to say, if I was flesh and blood and lined up next to him, I bet I would feel agony being the same gender.

"Y, yes. If you can wait for a map for just three more days, the latest, most precise one should be finished."

So that's the face of a woman who fell in love at first sight. I'm the type that doesn't believe in love at first sight, but if he's this good looking, you feel like it can't be helped. A-, don't tell me...

When I glance towards Ramis and Hyurumi at my side drinking beverages, curious about the state they're in... they're excitedly gazing at the young man.

"Hyurumi, look, look, it's a pretty guy who looks like he came out of a picture."

"O-, for reals. He's freakin' good looking."

How should I say it; they're lightheartedly excited. It's not the feeling that they've fallen for him; their excitement is like finding a celebrity in the middle of town. It's like

it's purely admiration.

"Three days, is it? Then after three days I will inquire into it again, ne."

On the way out, he showed a smile that resembled a refreshing spring breeze and went out the door.

The two receptionists kept waving their hands even now, after his figure disappeared. What an amazing ikemen effect.<sup>1</sup>

Women are easily taken in by appearances, na. But when it's to that degree, it doesn't feel irritating. Someone who's a man, but beautiful, and is a person with a big heart, that would easily sway you; I agree and think that as well.

Even looking at him with the eyes of one of the same gender, I'm thinking that if he's that good looking it can't be helped. That's how good looking he is.

"He's like a hero from legends, ne?"

"Ramis, that be like a statue erected that's all beautifying a hero. For them famous Hunters, they mainly be ossans that are balls of straining muscles; that's the standard."

Ramis was in shock after her dreams were crushed. That's a reality that you were happier not knowing, na. Un, un.

"The, then, with 100 divine protection, that famous Hunter that's called someone who's received the favor of the gods!? There's stories about an overwhelmin'ly beautiful girl that comes up though; me, I super look up ta her!"

She's flustered so her dialect appears.

But man, 100 divine protections is amazing, na. How many points would you have to spend? *Are?*

Come to think about it, I can spend points to gain functions and divine protections, but I wonder, do other Hunters have a point system?

I completely take this system for granted, but do the people who are Hunters just get stronger after defeating monsters, I wonder. I can't really ask that question outloud with my fixed wordset at all, na.

"A-, the one who has received the gods' favor, huh? She was a truly beautiful and kind person, according to literature and testimonies that were left until now, na. Just, she

didn't stay in any one place, so each place's left behind their own legends, so the details about her be unknown, ze."

What a cool person, na. True character unknown, a wandering beauty, and even more so a strong character, huh? If she was the subject of a story, it's bound to be popular without a doubt.

"Thank goodness-. Because she's my ideal, ne!"

"Maa, that pretty boy-kun too, he might be one o' them special people, na. If he's got the ability to challenge the maze level by himself, that'd be fittin'."

If his appearance is like that, even if his skills aren't to that degree the female Hunters would want to be his team members so bad. Regardless, if he can make it all by himself, then his abilities should stand out, na.

Maybe, his team members might be waiting outside, but somehow it feels like he doesn't let other people approach him. His demeanor was gentle and polite, but I could also see that he left a step's distance from contact.

But, well, as long as you don't harm your comrades, whatever you're like inside is fine.



At night, the common sense of the Maze Level that doesn't have any entertainment facilities at all is to retire early.

Ramis and the other are staying at the inn that has a surplus of useless rooms, but as seen from outside, the light in the window is already extinguished; they seem to have gone to sleep quickly.

I am stood up in front of the inn. Although I could have been put inside the room, we would be troubled if the floor went out with my weight so I was put outside.

I have become used to the body of a vending machine, so I don't hate being left outside like this. Actually, it feels like my body has strangely gotten accustomed to it.

It feels like both my mind and body are becoming a vending machine... not that that's a bad thing.

At night I activate energy-saving mode, letting just a little bit of light shine. The area

around has no light sources, so just this much will stand out as being odd.

But man, I think the Maze Level is really out of date. Even if you say that everything other than the maze is safe, the ground is barren so crops can't be grown. There aren't any monsters either, nor are there animals. It looks like dirt that has nothing on it, but actually there's a profitable use for it, this place.

If this was modern day Japan, then it feels like an industrial area would be put up. But that would be hard for normal people in a labyrinth where you have no idea what will happen, huh?

In the first place, to this day, there are way too many unknown points as to what kind of thing a labyrinth is. The dungeons that I know about don't have a sky, nor is each level so huge. How do I say it; the scale is way too different.

And besides, saying that if you clear the deepest level any wish you have can be granted seems false. Not that I can confidently say that an existence that can create that kind of foolish, imaginary world doesn't exist.

U-n, I'd like a vending machine to only ponder on what drinks will sell, but it seems that's not possible.

While I had been thinking about it quite seriously, unexpectedly the area around me has gotten light. O-, so someone's exiting the inn.

The double doors at the inn's entrance were flung open, and from there a single beautiful man walked out. It was the young man that had stood out during the day.

He, with a wavering, unreliable gait, he slunk over and stood in front of me. When the light that I emit shone on him, his expression had no vigor; I can't feel even the tiniest bit of the attitude of confidence and composure that he had from during the day. His gaze never settled on anything, and his body shook bit by bit.

What happened? His form right now is a gloomy, waste of an ikemen who's behaving suspiciously.

"Aaaaa-, mou, my nerves are on edge, naa. Why does everyone just stare at me? HAAAaaa, it's so scary. Even though I came because I heard that there weren't many people on this level, there's plenty of people heeeeeere."

N-?

Right now, wasn't this young man quickly muttering something quite pitiable? Oi, oi, don't tell me that he was forcing his attitude during the day and this is his true self.

"Mou-, impooooooooosible. I don't want to talk to peeeople. Seriously, give me a break. Haaaaaaaaa."

That's a sigh that's like his soul is going to come out of his mouth, na. This person, he has a communication disability, huh? So in order to hide this he made himself that ikemen character. The reason he's acting on his own is due to his communication disorder. How do I say it... all of a sudden a feeling of friendliness has welled up.

"Notgoodnotgood. Taking everything negatively; Mother always told me it's no good to think all about bad things. Positive thoughts, positive thoughts."

Watching him breathing in and out repeatedly, clutching his sword tightly, I felt like cheering him on.

I'm pretty sure I remember hearing that the cacao nut has nerve calming properties in it and a relaxing effect or something. If that's the case, let's stock cocoa.

"Welcome."

"Uwaaa-, that scared me! E-, what's this!?"

He was quite surprised, so that he jumped three meters from his spot. His body's abilities are amazing. If he makes that great of a reaction, it will tickle my mischievous heart, but if I mess with him I'll be getting my priorities backwards.

"Please insert the coins."

"A, u. It's the box that was at the Hunter Association during the day, na. I'm pretty sure that it was a mysterious box you can buy things from. The Pouch Bear Cat Demon people were buying things."

While leaning his upper body backwards several times, he skillfully came closer. He completely gives off the truth that he's scared. I'm the cause of it, but I want to give him cocoa to drink to have him calm down.

To make the cocoa stand out, I try making the entire bottom row all cocoa.



“Um, I’m pretty sure the coins should go in here. And then, I think you push the bump under the product you want.”

As proof that the coin had slipped into my body and it was possible to purchase things, the button lit up.

“I wonder what I should get. This one with the picture of a cup filled with a brown liquid is a drink, right? There’s a lot of them lined up so it should be popular; it looks like the tea that I drink at home, so maybe I’ll do this one.”

I’m happy that he bought the cocoa like I expected, but his soliloquy was long. Come to think of it, when a friend of mine developed a lifestyle of working from home so that he practically didn’t encounter any people, he said he increased his instances of talking to himself, na.

“Uwaa, it’s warm. Uum, the way to open it is, I think, lift up here... that did it.”

His innocently happy figure is adorable, zo. Even though he’s a super tense ikemen, if his smiling face is cute, the older onee-samas will fall for him in an instant.

“Fumu-. It’s sweet and delicious, naa. Somehow it’s very relaxing. This magic tool is great, na. There’s no human element, so I can buy things at ease without being nervous.”

It troubles me if you stare at me with greedy eyes, though. Although it’s not bad to be appraised with a high evaluation, I’ve already decided on where I should be.

“I’m pretty sure, were the owners those girls? Let’s try to negotiate tomorrow.”

Muttering like so, he clutched the cocoa can in both hands like it was something precious, and his figure disappeared into the inn.

I think it will be useless to try negotiating, but not forcibly stealing me is honorable. Personally I think he’s the type of person I can like, but I bet I won’t have any more points of contact with him. Tomorrow we’ll be moving according to a different request after all.

“Hakkon, Misha-el-kun<sup>2</sup> will be accompanying us on our request!”

“I’ll be in your care, Hakkon.”

The morning of the next day, Ramis, who came flying out in front of me, said this as the first thing out of her mouth.

Standing next to her was the refreshing ikemen with a smile, his hand held out until he realized I couldn’t shake hands, then embarrassedly scratched his head.

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1. ikemen- good-looking guy. Not pretty boy. More of a moderately slender guy who’s good looking but still is clearly masculine.
  2. Debated with Michel, but I mean, it’s clearly “Michelle”, which is a girl’s name to us westerners and would break the immersion, so went with the Hebrew Mishaël.

# Chapter 50

## The Perimeter

Hyurumi and the Big Eaters Brigade are riding on a cart-boar wagon prepared by the Bear President; to the side is Ramis, carrying me, and one young man walking.

“Haha-, that’s true.”

“But, we’re actually planning on investigating the interior of the maze, ne.”

“Ee, maa.”

“Ain’t it fine? We got a strong Hunter as our companion. If a one in a million chance situation happens, he can deal with it. We can rely on him.”

“Haha-, that’s true.”

“To think that we’d have this man, the singular Black Flash Mishael-san; it’s an honor, na-“

“Ee, haha-“

If you didn’t know about that previously mentioned event last night, you’d just see a young man interacting with a refreshing, easy-going smile, but... if you look carefully, his cheeks are faintly twitching; the words to your replies are pretty much identical, Mishael-kun.

In accordance with the Bear President’s request, we continued to the perimeter of the large maze. To the left the maze’s outer walls soar above. To the right is the vast, desolate land. Enemies don’t come out of the maze; outside there are no presences of living things.

It’s a request with quite the low risks, so it’s a request that is fine even with Ramis, Hyurumi, and the Big Eaters Brigade as the total work force. But recently strange things keep happening, meaning that you don’t know what could happen, so even

though it was a sudden proposal, the addition of Mishael, a competent person whose name is well-known, was approved of – and that's the circumstances.

“Hyurumi, about this perimeter; if nothing happens, it will only take about a month to go around it?”

“A year ago, seems like that's what it was for them Hunters that were in charge of the investigation, but calculating with Hakkon's picture as the base, it feels like it won't even take three weeks by my reckoning, na. Ain't it that; in order to inflate the request fee, they probably took that much time on purpose.”

A-, I see. Because it's safe, the request fee handed over would only be made up of the number of days it took; it's not strange that there would be Hunters who think about that.

“This time, this be the best task for us, who've got the infinitely food-providing Hakkon. Initially it was requested of the Big Eaters Brigade, who are acknowledged to have strong vitality, but there be the problem with food, na.”

The Big Eaters Brigade are suited to the investigation because they're fleet-footed and adapt easily to the wilderness... at least they seem like they would be, but there's that biggest demerit, the securing of food. Thus Ramis and I were made their companions, and furthermore, whether the maze walls have deteriorated or not, whether the surrounding area has changed or not, whether there are any signs of irregularities; Hyurumi is responsible for the state of those kinds of detailed investigations and analyses.

It's a simple job where we're just leisurely moving alongside the outer wall as if taking a stroll, but up until now I've been mixed up in way too many situations outside of my expectations, so no matter what, let's be vigilant.

“Then, just to be safe, I will be in charge of the rear guard.”

The words were so sudden that I became concerned and I looked at the voice's owner.

Like it's natural, Mishael had moved from his spot to the last in line, but understanding that he's not suited to be within anyone's line of sight, he breathed out a sigh of relief.

Maa, he's completely laid bare within my line of sight, but he doesn't know so let's just

ignore that. But, if he's this shy of strangers, then why did he become a companion for this time's task?

I'm pretty sure he was going to propose buying me the vending machine to Ramis... is what should have happened, but something went wrong somewhere and it turned out like this. It's not I'm at the degree of doubting him, but I still have suspicions about his behavior so let's carefully observe him.

Moving to the very back, as long as no one looks over their shoulder to check on Mishael's situation, he's looking slightly down and walking silently. You have to watch his face to realize it, but his mouth is moving slightly.

Is he muttering something to himself? If I concentrate my attention there I can pick up his voice.

"Just this... one month... I can manage... unfamiliar... girls... pouch-bear-cats... can do it..."

Intermittent as it is, I kind of understand what he's saying. In other words, there isn't anyone else other than girls and those of the Tasmanian devil family; in becoming the companions of these members, he's thinking about improving his communication disorder, even if it's just a little, huh?

I understand that each one of the Big Eaters Brigade is pretty different from a human so it would make contact with them easier, but shouldn't women make you more nervous than men? Maa, there are a lot of grim-looking Hunter men, na... with the gatekeepers Karios and Gols-san, they're at the level of being able to make weak-willed children cry if met at night.

Fumu; if that's the case, then I'll lend a hand. When he buys things I'll make sure to say something; it's just a little bit, but it would be good if he could get used to a male voice. Well, maa, I can only do that much; I look around our surroundings, but there's nothing there, na.

Just the wall and wasteland. It's completely the same view so it doesn't feel like you've progressed at all. So this is going to be the state of affairs for close to a month. If I was alone I'd be fed up with it, but with the soothing Big Eaters Brigade and Ramis and Hyurumi here, it doesn't seem like it will be painful.

When it became noon, everyone bought products from me, and each person ate where

he or she wished. Though I said that, they just split into three groups.  
The childhood duo Ramis and Hyurumi. The Big Eaters Brigade. And, Mishael.

Like that it gives the lonely image of Mishael being left out. Ramis and Hyurumi had sociably invited him to eat with them, but he, who is extremely shy of strangers, gently refused while guarding his true feelings with a smile as his perfect guard.

Not yet; it seems like eating together is too high of a hurdle. It would be great if he could get to the level of eating normally with them within this one month's time.

Even though you could say that quite an ikemen is in close proximity to Ramis and Hyurumi, I'm not irritated or flustered. That his speech and conduct up until now haven't been threatening is a big part of it, but how do I say it; seeing his speech and conduct makes me want to give him support.

"A, tomorrow, let's take my meals 1 meter closer, un."

When I heard these words slip out, riding on the wasteland's fiercely blowing winds, I feel like wanting to cheer him on more.

On the surface he looks like he's looking around and smiling while eating, but he's actually constantly watching the others' lines of view while putting up a smile.

I think it would be preferable to reveal that he's weak to human interaction so he can relax, but I guess he can't do that and that's why he's putting on the false face, na. Just what kind of family environment was he raised in to become something like that?

When the meal finished, once again we began leisurely following alongside the outer wall. How peaceful. I've acknowledged that carelessness is prohibited over and over so I don't have any intention to pay any less attention than necessary, but having nothing happen is the best.

And then the first day really came to an end with nothing occurring other than walking.

This level isn't cold at night, and the temperature throughout the year changes very little, so every one of the Big Eater's Brigade lay on top of the ground, their full bellies exposed, and hearty snoring resounded from them. Let's use the security camera and record it.

It looks like Ramis and Hyurumi are sleeping in the covered wagon; their faint sleep-breaths can be heard. The left over Mishael and I are standing watch together, but he spent the whole day today constantly minding the others' lines of sight so his mental exhaustion seems to have come out; he's sitting cross-legged, but his consciousness seems like it will fly off somewhere; his nodding head has fallen forward a number of times.

"Ha-, not good, not good. Hakkon is watching guard for everyone so it's okay. Even if they say that, though. Haaaa, mou-, my nerves are sho-t. Those two are gorgeous, and all of the Big Eaters Brigade are adorable. I was soo desperate to tighten my expression. A, that's right, supposedly... this magic tool box is supposed to have a consciousness, na."

Maa, I think it's normal to not believe it right away. Those two girls's judgments are too good, and the Big Eaters Brigade are just strung along by food, na.

Tapping his chin with his hand he drew close to the degree of analyzing a painting, staring as if he was trying to see inside me; this is embarrassing.

"Welcome."

"A, yes. Welcome. G,good evening."

Rather than his normal ikemen mode, I like this simple, timid state better. I could believe it if you said he's a young man who's afraid of people because he came from the countryside.

"Uum, maybe I'll buy something. Come to think of it, that sweet, relaxing drink, it really was delicious. Usually just buying something would be nerve-wracking, but if it's this magic box tool I don't have to worry about people's eyes so it's great."

Un, un. It's not like I don't understand about getting nervous in front of a shopping attendant, ne. Being able to freely shop is another one of the vending machine's merits.

At a time like this, while clutching the cocoa and breathing out a relaxed sigh, Mishael's profile, staring off at nothing, looks younger than his age.

His slack expression when he lets down his guard is an older-lady killer. I can even state that if it's someone that likes shotas, then they'll fall for him with one look. He



has a beauty that would normally make you jealous, but it's most likely a natural virtue of his that you feel like wanting to support him when you watch him.

—

From then one week has passed; there really wasn't a single battle, nor did problems arise; the days were passed pleasantly. Mishael seems to have closed the distance just a tiny bit.

It's probably the result of the meritorious efforts of the Big Eaters Brigade's cuteness and Ramis' sociability. That said, he's still distant, so he hasn't had a conversation in his true manner even once.

I've always been wary of that sort of Mishael, but today it's Ramis that seems off. Her eyes are distant and her steps are heavy. It looks like just walking is taking everything she's got.

"Oi oi, what's wrong, Ramis? If ya ain't feeling well, Hakkon and you can ride on the wagon together, na."

"Welcome."

Un, un. This isn't a task we're in a rush for, so there's no need to be unreasonable.

Leaning her body out of the wagon, Hyurumi beckoned with her hand. That girl's physical abilities aren't up to par so her place is always there, but Ramis hasn't ever gotten on the wagon even once.

"N-, it's okay. I'm full of energy-"

She raised her hand to show it, but she doesn't look okay. The usual vigorous, energetic smile has a shadow cast about it, you know.

But really, I wonder what happened all of a sudden. If it's a cold she hasn't had a single sneeze or cough though, nor sniffed her nose. From time to time she rubbed her abdomen, so I bet her stomach hurts. Getting food poisoning from my goods is impossible, na. Then, what is it?

"Ra,ramis-san, it won't do to push yourself. It's better to rest your body here."

"E-, hya-!"

Mishael tried to carry Ramis, so I changed into the cardboard vending machine. With this he will be able to carry us, and will even be able to carry us to the wagon with a light step.

“Hakkon-san is lighter than I thought, ne.”

No, no, it's because I became cardboard, you know? If it was the usual vending machine, at this time you'd be embedded in the ground.

Ramis is trying to resist it but it seems like her strength isn't coming out, so just like that she was hoisted onto the wagon. It seems like she doesn't have the energy to put up a strong rejection so she gave up and sat down.

“Hyurumi-san, can I ask you to nurse her?”

“Yah, leave it to me.”

Whatever you say, leaving it to this girl who's good at taking care of people is reassuring. When I am removed from her back, I'm put softly outside of the wagon. I turn back into the original vending machine; let's provide only a sports drink for refreshment just in case.

When I dropped it into the opening, Mishael responded immediately with a “It's a refreshment from Hakkon-san,” and placed it on the corner of the wagon.

“Fer cryin' out loud; like always ya gotta push yourself until your very limits. Let me take your clothes off and help you change.”

“I, it's fine. I can do it myself...”

“Don't try to stay cool when ya about to fall over. Other people's kindness is something ya should accept obediently.”

Stomping and resisting sounds are able to be heard, but from just the sounds it seems to convey that Hyurumi is getting the upper hand. Ramis seems to really have gotten weak. She should rest quietly for some—

“Ooo-! -tte, there's blood, ain't there-! Ya damn fool! Why didn't you say someth... ing...”

a-!"

"A, a, a, a!"

Hyurumi's panicked voice continued, Ramis' voice that was only able to repeat "A" reached me.

"Ramis, is this blood your period-?!"

"Mooooou, you idiooot!"

Just what are you blurting out in such a loud voice? Ramis is raising up a scream of despair; how pitiful.

Mishael averted his eyes, placing his hand over his mouth in surprise, but for me I suddenly understood why she was feeling weak and light-headed.

There's this kind of day that happens about every month, na. I'm sorry I didn't realize it.

# Chapter 51

## Reality and Fantasy

“What’s a period? Is that food?” (Pel)

“I wonder; I haven’t heard of it either, na.” (Shote)

“Looks like it’s something related to women, but Suko, do you know?” (Mikene)

“Um, let’s see; it happens a lot for females of humans, or like the primate races, but it’s a characteristic symptom of females when blood flows from their lower regions.”

The Big Eaters Brigade gathered together and secretively whispered through a conversation like boys in the upper years of elementary school would have.

Oh yeah, other than humans and a small portion of animals, no others menstruate, and even if they do, I heard that it’s pretty light.

“Gawdammit, you’re bein’ unreasonable. Ramis, I bet this time your period’s on the heavy side. A-a, your underwear and the cloth is all smeared in blood, ain’t it. If it’s like this, we gotta change your cloth or else ye gotta be worried about gettin’ a disease.”

“Au-, yes ma’am...”

“It ain’t like this is something to be embarrassed about, giving birth to children is a woman’s privilege. You need to treat the matter more importantly.”

I can’t see what they’re doing, but just from their voices I can tell that Hyurumi is dealing with it quickly. With regards to this, men are weak, na. If there was anything within my power... after providing a clean towel there’s, a-, maa, there is something, na.

I pick out <Manual Sanitary Items Vending Machine> from my functions and form change.

I change into a pure-white body, as if appealing cleanliness, and I've also become quite slim. As the "Manual" in this vending machine's name implies, it's the type that doesn't need electricity, and when you put in the coin and turn the lever the product comes out.

The products this vending machine sells are only two. Napkins and Masks.

Probably, if you were a girl you'd have the chance to see them in the bathrooms in areas like department stores and the train stations. I imagine that the men who have seen it are few.

So then what, I'm limited to only being able to provide products that I've purchased myself before, so... n,no, it's not like there's anything I have to feel guilty about.

My relatives are in the cleaning industry; in my student days I was a part-timer a number of times. There were times were I cleaned both men and women's toilets, and when I saw a vending machine I hadn't seen before, without knowing what its contents were I bought them strictly out of past curiosity. -tte, like that matters right now.

"Are, what happened to Hakkon all of a sudden? He's become slim and white, na. To change right now, it must have some sort of meaning, huh? I'll try putting in a coin."  
(Ramis)

With Ramis and Hyurumi as the other party, my intentions get through easily; it truly helps out.

Turning the lever, the product came out, but although they stared at it, it seems they don't know what it is so they tilted their heads.

"Heeh, it's a something different, na. This clear pouch ain't needed, na. It's weird textured cloth... no, paper, huh?"

Tampering with it while investigating, currently, without me doing anything, she came to an understanding so, while she kept making mistakes, she somehow knows how to use it now.

"This be pretty amazing, na, it's got a fierce absorption rate. If it's this, then even on the days when it comes out a lot, you wouldn't have to worry about it."

Letting water from a water bottle soak into a newly bought sanitary napkin, she was impressed.

Periods are also a real-life issue, na. You can find lots of women adventurers in fantasy works, but it seems in reality there are quite the hidden hardships.

“Want me to wash your bloody trousers and underwear with water from Hakkon?” (Hyurumi)

“A, I can wash it. Since I have washed my older sister’s and mother’s things.” (Mishael)

When I, who was placed near the wagon, saw Mishael take the dirty underwear and trousers without showing even a little dislike for it, I admired him. As a male it’s something you have a little resistance towards, but because it looks like he had a female-run family he seems to have gotten used to it.

For the sake of this man, I add a new function.

I’ve thought about taking this way back, but I change into <Fully Automatic All-in-One Coin Washer and Dryer>. This is the drum-type washers at the coin laundries.

For Hunters, because it becomes luggage, even if they prepared clothes it would only be one change at best, so they don’t mind the unhygienic look that’s their daily wear. With this, even in the middle of subjugating monsters and in the middle of requests they can wash their clothes, so I thought they would be pleased.

For now I open the round door with a *\*pop\** and appeal that they should throw it in here. Mishael is a friendly young man who has no bad intentions at all, but I am resistant to having him hand wash Ramis’ underwear, na.

“He changed into a mysterious shape, but what does he want, I wonder?” (Mishael)

“Looks like Hakkon wants ya to put the dirty things in there.” (Hyurumi)

“Welcome.” (Hakkon)

“Then, I am putting them in.” (Mishael)

This time is a trial run as well as a free service. Since there’s an automatic detergent dispensing device attached I put it in, and now there’s only waiting. Just saying, you can set the wash style and time, but I went and did all of those operations.

It seems like Mishael is having fun watching the washing machine; he's staring in with his face near the glass. Seeing him like that, the Big Eaters Brigade had their curiosity stimulated, so all members are watching the clothes being washed go round and round. What's with this situation.

A washing machine's performance should be about 30-40 minutes, but because I raised my speed, it finished in about 10 minutes. I was right to raise my speed, na. I can't transform for more than two hours, so if I hadn't shortened the time then this would be a function I couldn't use often.

When the sound that meant it was done sounded, the Big Eaters Brigade jumped backwards with a "BUAAAAAA-!" and were surprised. I'm already getting used to their screaming look.

When he opened the door, hesitating a bit, Mishael thrust his hand in, took out the washed trousers and underwear, and lifted them to the sky. The underwear and trousers are blowing in the wind that blows through the wasteland.

Mishael, staring at womens' trousers and underwear. No matter how much being an ikemen can count for, it won't be able to cover for this.

"This is amazing, it's pure white!"

He grabbed my body that had become a washing machine, shaking my entire body violently. *Are*, he's way more into it than I thought, na.

"Let's wash other dirty clothes! I'll throw everything I have other than my armor in. Everyone, bring out your dirty clothes please!"

Soon after I stopped, he was taking dirty clothes from his backpack, putting them into the washer. As for Hyurumi she stripped off in the wagon, with just a piece of underwear on she stuck her face out and threw her laundry into the washer.

The Big Eaters Brigade were no exception; taking off their jackets, remaining only in their shoes, they stood there dumbfounded.

"It's great, isn't it, I mean the process of removing the dirt. Cleaning a room is like this as well, but don't you think making clothes clean is the best feeling? In my household



the maids rarely let me, so right now I'm having a lot of fun."

Aa, so that's why his eyes were sparkling so much when he was watching the inside of the washing machine. He was more delighted than anything. I found out from his statement just now about the maids in his house, but this person had such a high social standing, na.

However, even if there's only the earnest Mishael, how is it that a young girl would expose her healthy body in just her underwear? Ramis is also in a state of being half-dressed. She just hasn't noticed it because she's not feeling well, it seems.

Mishael is in a position where he can't see inside the wagon, but if it's in the place where I am, you can see the girls' forms well.

It's a rare opportunity, so should I check out the girls in their underwear? If I get to know the girls' tastes, I'll be able to use it in future product expansion, na. That's all it is, there's no other deeper meanings. I don't have any ulterior motives at all. Not even a bit.

Maa, I say check out, but unlike modern day Japan, there aren't any elaborate designs. It's just, she's a Hunter who's mainly a muscle-laborer, so Ramis has a T-back, huh? If you do vigorous movements, that type might be better.

After that on the petite body are the heinously large orbs, but losing to gravity, they push down on the chest. Usually they're compressed by leather armor, so as of yet they haven't given as strong of an effect, but when lightly dressed the destructive power isn't half-assed. Even though she's lying down, I can tell that size isn't normal at a glance.

"Ramis, did your chest get bigger again?"

"...Maybe. I can't really tell."

Taking a good, hard stare, after Hyurumi observed the weakened Ramis' chest, she changed her line of sight to her own chest and "Ha-" gave a worn out sigh.

For that girl, she has just a black cloth wrapped around her chest; it's practically flat. As always, she's got a good shape and thickness in the butt, but for girls it seems the concern is all about the chest.

Personally, whether it's big or whether it's small, there aren't any problems, but in regards to male instincts, my eyes are on the women with big chests. Well yeah, women are going to be bothered by it.

In this situation, if it's a guy then they'd be thrilled with excitement, but what has that got to do with me that's a vending machine? No, right now I'm a washing machine. In this form I'd be troubled if I had to release sexual desire, so it would be weird for me to complain about it.

The washing and drying finished; it seems all the members who put on the washed laundry were satisfied with the faint smell of the scented detergent and the texture.

"So, how about taking the rest of the day today to rest?"

"Yah. It's still noon, but once in a while it's fine, I guess."

Worried for Ramis' condition, it seems it's decided that we won't move for the rest of the day today. The Big Eaters Brigade sprawled out on the ground and sun-bathed.

Mishael's delight over the washing still hasn't disappeared, so he was thinking about whether to unfasten the wagon's canopy and wash it. Hyurumi is on the wagon, checking on the sleeping Ramis' condition from time to time while reading some kind of book.

Well then, what should I do? For now let's return from the washing machine to the usual vending machine. A-, Mishael's is frankly making a disappointed face.

Oh yeah, right now I've got a surplus of points, so I could also try seeing what kind of effects the status changes have.

The statuses of the vending machine are Endurance, Durability, Strength, Speed, Dexterity, and Magic.

After all this time, I have nothing I need to investigate about Endurance and Durability. Speed raises the speed of all operations, so I will be likely to raise it more from now on.

Now then, the problems are the left over Strength, Dexterity, and Magic, but even if

you spend PTs Magic won't go up, so it's excluded.

And so it's about Strength, but what exactly is a vending machine's Strength<sup>1</sup>?

As of now, there's been nothing that I've needed power for while existing in the form of a vending machine. If I grow hands and feet and can move on my own, then it might be an indispensable ability. I think, as of now, there's no way to use it.

What's left is Dexterity... what is that? Does that mean that it would be possible to make more precise actions? Right now I haven't been able to find any functions where precise actions are needed, so I don't feel the necessity to raise this either.

To raise both to 10 I need ten thousand points, but it feels like a waste to spend on abilities I don't know how to use, na.

In the end, just considering it without raising any abilities, the day wore on.

- 
1. Literally in Japanese, Strength is muscular strength, hence his confusion.

# Chapter 52

## Mishael

“Sorry, ne, everyone; I’ve caused you trouble.” (Ramis)

When it became morning the first things Ramis, whose color looks quite a lot better, said were words of thanks and apologies, bowing her head.

Everyone was preparing breakfast, but they rushed over to the lightly-dressed Ramis descending from the cart.

“O-, your body’s feeling better? Don’t ya push yourself.” (Hyurumi)

“E,ee, please do not push yourself. We can have Hakkon-san put out fresh Haerowasay.”

By the way, Haerowasay is referring to spinach. There are a lot of vegetables that aren’t different from Japan’s, but the names are completely different.

Aa, I handed over that and canned raisin bread. If you’re talking about iron, I heard that there was some in raisins.

“Everyone, I’m sorry I didn’t say anything about feeling sick.”

“So that was what that bloody smell was. I thought you were hiding some raw meat.”

When Mikene fired that off while tilting his head, his comrades also nodded in agreement. I knew the Tasmanian devils’ sense of smell is keen, but I hadn’t thought that they would be able to sniff out the scent of menstruation.

“With just this, girls are at a disadvantage when it comes ta’ Hunter activities. This ain’t a rushed job. Don’t push yourself.”

“Th,that’s right. Your troubles are everyone’s troubles.” (Mishael)

“Thanks. I’ll reflect on it.” (Ramis)

*Are*, it's still kind of suspiciously done, but he's able to have a conversation even if he's not in ikemen-mode. Even though there's no way he can interact without his communication disorder acting up, because he hurriedly washed the girls' clothes, did the fence around his heart lower a little?

Because I'm gazing at the three of them conversing, I realized something. Could it be that you'd see this situation as none other than Mishael's harem party? Two beauties and healing beastmen. I'm a vending machine so I'd be considered a magical tool, huh? Without the vending machine, it would be the ideal fantasy party.

With Ramis's embarrassment as the start, Mishael opened his heart and became able to take meals with them, and after a week had passed he had completely gotten used to it.

"However, Hakkon-san; he's an excellent magical tool, ne." (Mishael)

"That's right. Both the meals and the drinks are tasty, all kinds of useful tools are put out, and he protects with the Barrier, he's amazing!"

If you praise me that much I'll get embarrassed. She's not conveying my thoughts; should I say voicing her true feelings very much like Ramis?

"I have seen all sorts of magical tools, but this kind of magical tool is a first." (Mishael)

"Yeah, that's right. It's just within what I know, but there ain't any magical tool similar to Hakkon recorded in the books. When talking to Hakkon it's possible to get some information, but... I've also pestered him for things that don't exist." (Hyurumi)

"Even so, just having the possibility of understanding his intentions is amazing. Right, Hakkon-san?" (Mishael)

"Welcome."

What's more, Mishael also seems to have favorably accepted me.

Because the distance between him and Ramis and Hyurumi was getting smaller, one would be suspicious of the matter of love affairs, but there are practically no hints of that. On one side it's an ikemen, on the other is two beautiful girls. It makes a pretty picture, but it seems like neither side has any interest. It might be that both sides

already have their hearts set on a partner, na.



It's been over two weeks since we set out to survey the perimeter but since there wasn't anything that happened, other than Ramis' condition being bad, and we also didn't meet any other living beings, it seems we're about to complete one circle around.

The maze's outer wall doesn't have any breaks or broken places, so just confirming it's safe seems it will complete the job. According to Hyurumi's calculations we'll reach the Maze Level's Community in three more days, so it looks like we'll finish safely without any dangers.

I've been providing for them with quite the low prices so my Points have pretty much not been increasing, but I have at least 500,000 Points left so there's no need to panic.

The three people are having fun talking to each other. He's wearing jet black armor, so at a glance he looks like an ikemen, but if you carefully observe him, Mishael is hunched over so that it looks like a little brother deferring to his two older sisters. Come to think of it he said he had an older sister, so he originally had the temperament of a little brother, I bet.

"N-... Everyone stop!"

Mikene, in the front, stopped in his tracks, baring his fangs and stopping the boar cart. Looking closing, each and every one of the other members of the Big Eater Brigade also had tense expressions; their noses are twitching, sniffing some sort of scent.

"Pel, can you tell by smell?"

"Er, let's see, the smell of people is coming from a little further ahead. I think they haven't wiped their bodies so it's quite smelly, naa. There's four, five human men. It seems there aren't any other animals or monster. Shote, can you hear them?"

"Yeah, I can't hear what they're saying, but there are a lot of men's voices."

Pel's sense of smell is sharp and Shote's sense of hearing is excellent, so Mikene listened to the two of their opinions and nodded in assent.

“Hyurumi-san. I don’t know what their aim is, but it seems there are around five humans lurking ahead.” (Mikene)

“For real, Mikene? Hunters at the perimeter... ain’t it. There ain’t no reason to loiter around a creature-less wasteland. Positively thinking, they’d be Bear President’s errand runners, but...” (Hyurumi)

“Would there be something urgent that’s come up?”

It seems that the occasion where we’ll need our strength has come. However, if there was a need to hurry, it wouldn’t just be people who came. Normally the boar carts and horses, although I don’t know if they have them, they would use those kinds of quick transportation.

“A-, it looks like it’ll be a smidge bad. On top of them bein’ on foot, there ain’t no way that they’d use that kind of numbers to come tell us something. That’d be the guys who get lonely easily and those guys who are way cautious who’d be stick together that.”

Hyurumi has the same opinion as me, huh? If you assume them to be hostile to us, their aim would be the magical tool, me.

Otherwise, Ramis and Hyurumi are beauties so their aim would be making them slaves and human trafficking. Come to think of it, the entire Big Eaters Brigade is a rare species, and when they don’t say anything their adorable, so they seem they’d be popular with the majority of people who have taste. Of course, I mean that from a criminal mindset.

That much is what I can understand for now. When kidnapping on this unpopular level, it wouldn’t be suspicious to say the victims died in the maze. There’s the problem with how to transport the victims, but I bet there’s a hidden way to do it.

“Everyone, I’m terribly sorry. There’s a high chance that the people lying in wait are those related to me.”

Mishael’s face clouded over and he said that very bitterly.

To think it’d be related to that one. It’s not like it’s definite, but he has some understanding of their aim.



“From here I’ll face them alone. I can’t cause trouble to you, after all.” (Mishael)

Mishael, who swiftly went into ikemen mode, who began to walk without waiting for a response – – Ramis grabbed that man’s shoulder.

“We still haven’t confirmed it, right? And if it’s dangerous then you should go alone, you know.” (Ramis)

“Please let go. The lives of those who come with me would be in peril.”

It seems like he was trying to shake off that hand, but there’s no way he could escape the super-strength of Ramis who was gripping his armored shoulder tightly, so it looks like a kid throwing a fit trying to escape from his parents.

“Ya calm down now. Do you have any intentions on telling us why they be aiming at you?” (Hyurumi)

“None.” (Mishael)

He clearly refused Hyurumi’s question. That instant reply implies that there’s some kind of secret.

It could also be some kind of complicated family situation. If it was just about his communication disorder there would be no problems... no, there are problems, but it wouldn’t become something this serious; there’s some other, hidden, big secret, na.

“I get that you’re worried about our wellbeing, but ya don’t gotta worry about that. We got Hakkon here, na.” (Hyurumi)

“That’s right. If Hakkon’s nearby, you don’t have to worry about getting hurt.” (Ramis)

The words of the two who have full trust in me decided it.

“Welcome.”

I have confidence that, as long as they’re close to me, I can protect them with <Barrier>.

With his mouth shut tightly like he wouldn’t agree to our side’s conversation, Mishael

glared at me with eyes half closed. So he needs more proof than words.  
I wrap Ramis, who is carrying me, in the <Barrier>.

“Just what is this blue light...” (Mishael)

“This is, you see, Hakkon’s Divine Blessing. It’s called <Barrier>. It repels all attacks, an invincible wall. It looks like it can defend against Level Ruler attacks.”

A, Mishael’s brows furrowed. Like he’s looking at some suspicious item, he’s staring hard. Maa, it makes sense that he can’t believe it.

“I get your feelings of being unable to believe it. It be fine to test it by slashing it with all of your strength. If your attack doesn’t go through at all, ya take us along with you, how about that?” (Hyurumi)

“You mean it, right? If it’s unable to defend against me, you absolutely promise you won’t chase after me?” (Mishael)

His eyes became sharp, and suddenly an oppressive atmosphere came from him. Mishael doesn’t hate us, he acknowledges our earnestness. I guess the cold attitude is to keep us at a distance because it’s dangerous.

However, Ramis is a softhearted person who picked up a vending machine and carried it away. She’s not a woman who will give up with just this much.

“Un, that’s fine. If that greatsword pierces the Barrier, even a little. We swear that we will obediently remain here for a day.” (Ramis)

Without wavering from his cold look, Ramis returned his gaze.

Those eyes must have conveyed a strong will; Mishael drew his greatsword from the giant scabbard on his back. The upper body of a dragon is carved onto the grip, but in front of the grip is the dragon’s head in place of the guard, and from that the widely flared, semi-transparent red blade extends.

It’s as if a dark dragon’s red-hot flames are being spit out; just looking at it is overwhelming.

It looks like it can exceed the defensive limits of <Barrier>. To answer to Ramis’ expectations, I can’t let it pass.

“Without holding back, I’m coming.”

Carrying the blade on his shoulder, he crouches down. His battle pose is cool, na... wait, this isn't the time to be leisurely observing. Now, come, no matter what kind of attack it is, <Barrier> will defend against it! Go for it, <Barrier>! Don't lose, <Barrier>!... I might seem excited, but somehow I, who must rely on <Barrier>, have become somewhat embarrassed.

"Haaaaaa-!"

A sharp exhale, a sharp swing down of the red blade, with an trajectory that slightly warped the tip it drew near – when I realized it the blade had already crashed into the <Barrier>

《Points have been reduced by 500》

Oooo-!

It went past the limits that the <Barrier> can completely guard against and a Point consumption notification came out. The Eight-Legged Alligator Level Ruler's body blow was an additional 1000 Point consumption, but Mishael's attack, it had about half the power of that body blow, huh?

How terrifying. This ain't your normal destructive force. If it's like this, I'll want to investigate how many Points Ramis's hit at full power would consume.

"Blocked... No way, this Evil Dragon's Roar attack was-"

As it was the situation where it was repelled, Mishael was absentminded and muttered bitterly. Right now's single attack was splendid, you know. I hadn't thought it would be possible for it to be half the damage of a hit from the Level Ruler.

"See, it's fine. Even if anything happens, there's no chance for us to get hurt." (Ramis)

"S'what she said." (Hyurumi)

A promise is a promise so, although reluctantly, Mishael approved of our accompaniment.

We're proceeding as if it's completely certain that they're enemies, but even if nothing occurs, it's better to be excessive than not.

# Chapter 53

## Pursuer

With Mishael as the vanguard, a little distance behind him is me being carried by Ramis, the two of us. And there's also Mikene with us. The rest of the Big Eaters Brigade and Hyurumi are left to keep watch over the boar-wagon.

I can't tell you what will be waiting for us in the end, but when I see the faces that have become grim, even an idiot can tell that it's not some trifling opponent that's waiting.

"Hakkon, when it comes to that, I'm counting on you."

"Welcome"

Actually, I also wanted to leave Ramis behind, but there's no way that Mishael can carry me off, na. Since it's become like this I'll at least protect her with all of my strength, but exactly what kind of opponent is lying in wait for us?

"Ramis. The number of men are five. As expected, it seems they're aiming for Mishael."

With his nose and ears twitching, Mikene made that assertion. So when the distance became closer, he can tell with just smell, huh? Even though the opponents forms are seen clearly through this kind of method, to be able to accurately confirm the number of people is difficult.

"The three in front are considerably skilled. The remaining two are magic, probably something like a four-elements, Divine Blessing user, I'd imagine."

Mishael's expression and tone have become manly. It's like a switch got flipped.

"Could it be that Mishael is reading their auras?"

"Yes, although it's only a little bit."

Being able to read auras seems like it comes in handy. Although it can't match up to

the usefulness of me who is a vending machine. It would be funny if he had Divine Blessings and functions as well as the ability to detect auras, though.

Right then, the problem starts from here. Mikene has also been told the effectiveness of <Divine Blessing> so I think he won't go too far away from me, but in case it happens I bet he'll manage since his escape speed is fast.

It's just, I don't think Mishael will obediently let himself be protected by me. He seems to be holding a serious secret, but it might be revealed in this time's incident.

In front of the party that proceeded with firm steps, five men's forms appeared.

One has a knife wound on his cheek, wrapped up in an atmosphere of an obviously long-serving soldier. That's very leader-ish, na. Three are clad in heavy armor that's steel blue, full-body armor with a shield and mace.

The other two are carrying two-handed staffs with large, crystal-like stones stuck to their tips, wearing hoods covering their eyes with a stereotypical magic user feel to them.

The three vanguards' equipment is a getup that I didn't catch sight of in Seiryu Lake. There's the fact that it was a level with high humidity so it wouldn't suit metal armor, but there aren't many hunters that would use a mace as their main weapon; yet unusually, all three of these vanguards have maces.

"Mishael-sama, isn't it? I have come forth for your life."

"As I thought, that is how it is. Whose men are you?"

"You should be aware of it even without me saying so."

"That isn't false."

Although it might be imprudent of me, this conversation has quite the mood. It's like watching a period-drama. However, my true feelings are that, rather than me figuring it out from observing on the side, I'd like a detailed explanation.

"By the way, is that beastman and... girl your comrades?"

Although it was only a moment, the eyes of the warrior with the knife scar stopped on me. Unable to understand it he immediately made a decision to stop thinking about it.

“They aren’t my comrades. They have only taken the same commission together with me. I don’t mind if you’re aiming for me, but I will not forgive you if you lay a hand on these two people and box.”

Was that calculated? At Mishael’s declaration, Ramis’ expression softened. Delighted that I was included as well, I bet.

“I see. If you will obediently offer your head for us to take, we shall swear not to touch them.”

It’s a rottenly suspicious statement from the bottom of his heart. I have never seen a precedent where someone who said he won’t lay a hand on someone didn’t lay a hand on him. Once Mishael’s in their hands, not wanting the news to be leaked out they’ll kill the witnesses too; it’s the cliché of all clichés.

“And if I believe that?”

“You’re free to make whatever conclusion you wish. Now then, Mishael-sama, what will you do?”

“I’ve made up my mind. You also won’t harm the girls if I defeat you bastards!”

He’s the perfect Hero-sama alright. It’s because his appearance is good that he looks like that. If it was a statement made by a vending machine, you’d laugh through your nose and that’s it.

Well, I should probably stop having fun being an onlooker here. I have to concentrate so I can deploy <Barrier> whenever I have to.

“How splendid of you. Harboring such noble feelings in your chest, why don’t you die a noble death in the wastelands?”

The opponents entered their battle stances. Having taken his strength with my body, I know of Mishael’s destructive power, but even if you say his attack power towers above the rest, whether or not he can win in personal battle is something else entirely.

If it's Ramis' destructive power, although it can overwhelm Leader Keryoil, if there was a time they had to go at it, it would be a simple matter to keep her strength sealed up. With Leader saying something like, "It's the first battle I had to counter strength completely with technique," I bet.

These guys are troublesome too, but the biggest problem is with the two magic-user-like people who pulled back to the rear. It's common sense in games that swordsmen are weak to magic-users, but I wonder if that applies to this other world as well?

Whichever the case, I don't have any obligations to obediently wait like this.

I form change in the <Pressure Washer>. The instant she saw this form the lightbulb went off in her head, and Ramis, while carrying me, grabbed hold of the nozzle.

Since she had a lot of practice on how to use it with the Flaming Rook Head Demons, she won't have any trouble handling it. Readying it at her waist, she set her finger on the lever.

"Mishael, leave your back to me!"

Ramis jumped in without waiting for the other's reply. Mikene also followed along, flustered. Surprise attacks are scary, so I've already setup <Barrier>.

"What is with that blue? You guys, clean them up first."

The two magic-user like guys pointed their staffs here. Right now, I just thought of it, but... will it block even magic? It doesn't just block physical attacks but also fire and heat so I think it should be okay. E, will it be okay!?

Without a care for me who's inner thoughts were like that, from the tips of the staffs, fireballs and rock pebbles came to attack us like rain blown sideways.

Ramis, with complete trust in me, thrusts her head into the downpour of fire and rocks. They crashed into <Barrier>'s semitransparent walls, but every single one of them was reflected without being permitted to penetrate through.

Alright, looks like magic-ish stuff is also blocked. Ramis, it's fine to go as wild as you want.

The enemies are terrified as Ramis, with the steel box that is me upon her back, thrusts towards them with something like magic that is not magic. They retreat in a state as if their legs are going to give out.

“Commence the hosing!”

When the distance had been reduced to 3 meters, high-pressured water sprays out from the tip of the nozzle.

“What is this, a Divine Blessing that manipulates water-!?”

It’s not with enough force that it would do anything other than hurt a bit when hit, but obstructing their vision and getting in the way is more than enough. Furthermore, I switched it from water to the carwash’s shampoo mode. In place of water, bubbles sprayed out, covering our opponents’ bodies.

“*Buwa-*, wh,what the, I can’t see! My eyes-!”

Well yeah, it hurts when detergent gets in your eyes. They’re trying to act violently while covered in bubbles, but aside from the fact that the soaked robes sticking to their bodies makes it hard to move, the detergents make their bodies slip splendidly and they fall.

“A, it looks kind of fun!”

It doesn’t look like anything but a water gun one-sidedly trampling the opponents, but I guess it could be fun. Mikene is enviously watching you, you know.

The opponents also try to counterattack, but <Barrier> blocks all of, so it’s one-sided trampling – or like, isn’t this bullying?

“What have you done, you bastards!”

The one yelling at me is the leader-ish man with the knife scar, huh? Even though the situation over there is three versus one, Mishael is enduring his opponents’ attacks. Even to an amateur’s eyes the attackers’ movements have finesse; you can also see the cleverness of their attacking techniques.

Even though they’re getting impatient as things aren’t going their way, knowing that



the rear-guard's movements have been sealed they get more flustered and it disturbs their movements.

This time I'm washing off the bubbles with Rinse Mode, but it mixes with the sand and so they fall with mud-smeared appearances. Even though they weren't hit with a direct blow, their breathing has become faint.

Mikene darts amongst the opponents that have been reduced to this state, wrapping their hands together skillfully with rope. And that's not all; he wraps cloth around their mouths and eyes as well.

"If you can't see you can't activate magic or Divine Blessings the way you want to, ne. There's also Divine Blessings that require words to activate, and it interferes with contacting their comrades."

Mikene seems used to dealing with these types of opponents, so he quite skillfully rendered them powerless.

"Mishael! We've defeated these ones!"

Ramis yelled the information over, disrupting the enemies' concentration; they're movements become clearly distracted. Mishael doesn't overlook this gap and, when he swings his greatsword three times, at that instant they collapse and fall to their knees on the ground.

"Thank you very much. If you hadn't lent a hand, it might have gotten dangerous. I am grateful."

To Mishael, who bowed his head deeply, Ramis responded lightly with, "It's fine-, it's fine-." Mikene walked over to the three people who were cut down with rope in hand; he examined their pulses and pupils but shook his head.

Killed, huh? The opponents came to kill so, in self-defense, it was the obvious action to take. Even though I can understand that with my head, that my heart is disturbed even a little is proof that I have come from living in peaceful Japan.

"The two over there have been made powerless, haven't they? So they can be questioned... you've aided me greatly."

There was no warmth from the pupils of his eyes; a cold light dwelt in them.

I hadn't felt anything when Ramis killed monsters, but to him only I feel a little fear; I'm too egotistic. This is another world; if just this much disturbs me I won't be able to survive.

Thanks to my lifestyle in Seiryu Lake being too comfortable, my outlook might have become too naive. Here, once again, I might have to harden my heart.

# Chapter 54

## It's Been A While Since the Seiryu Lake Level

“Would you call everyone we left behind over? Because there’s something I need to get out of these people.”

He wants to finish interrogating them while we’re not around, I suppose. In a round about way he was stating that the topic was such that he would be troubled if we were around.

“Got it. Then, we’ll go to bring Hyurumi and the others here, okay?”

Ramis is a considerate, good girl, after all. Without pursuing it any further, together with Mikene and me, we turned around and left that place. As I was swaying on her back, getting further and further away, I watched Mishael, but although I saw his profile when he glanced once towards us, that face was expressionless so I was unable read into it at all.

“Looks like Mishael also has a lot going on, ne?”

“Welcome.”

“If it’s like this, it’s hard to tell how far we can get involved, ne?”

“Welcome.”

“I do understand that this time was something that didn’t have anything to do with us, but for some reason I just couldn’t stay quiet. I wonder if it’s better to leave some more distance between us.”

Ramis is thinking about all sorts of things. I also don’t know what answer would be good for that question. If there are people who think it’s a pain if you meddle, there are also people who think they’d want you to ask about it.

It looks like he is afraid of getting anyone else rolled up into things. Rather than being

afraid of being rejected, it feels like he's just taking care not to make unnecessary victims.

In the time that I was thinking about those kinds of things we had joined up with Hyurumi and the others waiting at the boar-cart and, without particularly hurrying, we headed back to Mishael's side.

The round trip took around 30 minutes, but when we had returned, there was only Mishael standing still alone; the two magic-user-like people where nowhere to be seen. The three bodies of the men he had killed and tossed aside were also gone.

I wondered if they had run away, but if you carefully analyzed the ground there are a number of faint traces of burns. There – are ones that look human-shaped too. Five of them. So in other words, that's how it is.

"Looks like you cleaned up. Thanks for your efforts."

"I brought everyone-"

Hyurumi, on top of being about to understand what had happened, called out to him carefreely. Ramis also lightly waves her hand without giving off a smidgen of seriousness.

"Welcome back. I apologize for getting you wrapped up in my personal affairs."

"No worries, no worries. About Hakkon, he got us wrapped up in all sorts of stuff, like getting kidnapped or falling from a Level Break."

"That's something."

"Too bad."

At that time I relied on you.

Listening to that conversation, it was just a little, but Mishael's tense face loosened.

"I can't go into the details, but there is a certain reason that my life is being aimed for. If we're together for anymore than this, then I would be risking all of you lives, so I will return first and go to a different level. You have been of assistance all this time."

“A, hold on. The fact is that you’re a person with real ability, so how about joining the Fools of Whimsy Brigade? Leader was saying he was looking for capable people, you know?”

“Right, that kinda thing came out of his mouth. If ya got ability, who cares about origin? In fact, we ain’t got a single guy in our brigade without something troublesome– is what he was braggin’.”

A ridiculous way of advertising. Come to think of it, Leader Keryoil certainly did say that. It’s just turning the tables on your pursuers; it will be good training in surprise attacks. I feel like he’d calmly say something like that. Leader Keryoil has a lot of guts.

“The Fools of Whimsy Brigade; that famous Hunter Group?”

“Yup, yup. Everyone’s really funny. We also promised to cooperate with them from time to time.”

“Well now, stop thinkin’ about difficult things for once and listen. Way I see it, getting more power is a good thing.”

“That’s true. Just once, I’ll plan on contacting them. Then, until we’re fated to meet again.”

He bowed his head very deeply, then stretched his spine back up and left. He was just at the brink of having departed, but I didn’t miss his muttering carried along on the wind.

“The Fools of Whimsy Brigade they say... having a bunch of people I don’t know... it’s impossiblille.”

A-, so the hurdle was too high for him after all. Although he’s a reliable guy in ikemen mode, let’s just think of that gap as also being part of his charm.

Nobody made to stop him, and when we could no longer see his stature, we resumed advancing. Since it seems that it wouldn’t be good if we raised our speed and caught up with Mishael we drop the speed as we’re able, slowly and leisurely meandering.

Reaching the community while taking over twice the time to do so, the sky is beginning to be dusk-dyed; there’s no need to hurry so we’re spending one night at

the Maze Level's only inn.

"A lot of things happened, but we'll finally be returning to Seiryu Lake Level, ne!"



The next day. The only person standing on top of the transfer circle in high spirits is Ramis. Hyurumi is sleepily stifling a yawn, and the Big Eaters Brigade are also sleepily rubbing their eyes.

That's how it should be. It's early in the morning and the sun still hasn't begun climbing in sky, so it's a time that's tough for night-people and nocturnal animals.

Yesterday we reported that there were no abnormalities to the Hunters Association; when they just lightly explained, our mission was completely done. After that they bought products from me in large quantities, making a fuss until late in the night, and here we are now.

"I'd like ta' take it easy and research once in a while." (Hyurumi)

"Right now, in Seiryu Level, there looks like there's a lot of work, so you can earn enough so you won't be troubled about what to eat, you know." (Mikene)

"It'd be nice to be able to eat until my stomach's full." (probably Pell)

"I want to swim in the lake. (Suko (girl))

"It's the place the Bear President is in charge of, so there shouldn't be anything bad about it." (Shote)

Hyurumi was expected, but it looks like the Big Eaters Brigade is also going to live on Seiryu Lake Level; I can have expectations that they'll also become regular customers from now on.

We're taking leave of the Maze Level, but I don't think I'll come here a second time. In the first place, if I hadn't gotten wrapped up into the level Break, then I also wouldn't have come floating down from the sky.

I also met new people, but as I thought, the place that calms me down the most is Seiryu Lake. I've only been away from it for about a month, but I have quite the

nostalgia for it.

I want to hurry up and do business with the usual regulars in front of the Hunters Association. They're probably all waiting for me too. Seeing the happy faces the moment they buy something is a vending machine's delight.

"Okay, let's go back-!"

At Ramis' voice the transfer circle was activated by a staff member and we, who were bathed in light flooding out from our feet, felt the sensation of our bodies becoming lighter.

And then, when I thought that we had lost consciousness for a moment, the light at our feet disappeared, and the surrounding scenery had changed as if a door opened.

Up until a moment ago it was a wooden room that was about 6 tatami mats, but it's now a large stone room over 100 m(squared). On the walls were magic tool lights installed at the four corners; even though there aren't windows the field of vision is secured with magic light.

"Looks like we've arrived at Seiryu Lake Level, ne." (Ramis)

So Seiryu Lake's transfer circle was located in this kind of a place. There is a ton of people, and there's also the transportation of goods, so if the room wasn't this big, there would probably be a lot of inconveniences.

Ramis threw open a door that was large enough for me to pass under with room to spare, going out into the passageway. To the right doors were systematically lined up; to the left a large window was installed.

The passageway is wide enough so that 4, 5 adults lined up side by side would have no problems, and its height covers at least 3 meters or more. From the light coming in from the windows, it looks like Seiryu Lake Community has good weather.

Straight ahead on the long passageway is another large double door; when you pushed those open it connects to the first floor's hall of the Hunters Association.

In the hall there aren't figures of Hunters, but only the Hunters Association staff.

Facing the counter was the staff onee-sans, lined up and seated as usual, and when they saw us... why are they surprised, putting their hands to their mouths?

“Huh? Why is Hakkon-san coming from there?”

E-, aa, I see. I fell from a Level Break, so you would think it'd be weird if I returned here from the transfer circle. So the reason they're surprised is that.

“Hakkon got tossed into the Level Break; he fell to the Maze Level. We got him back, see.”

Hyurumi immediately explained. With that, the receptionist-sans' questions should be answered.

“A, I heard of that from the President, so I'm aware, but...”

Huh? Then why were you surprised? If you knew then there shouldn't be any problems.

“Hakkon-san, were you here this morning? Over a week before weren't you doing business in the community?”

“E-.”

E-. The voice that Ramis and Hyurumi leaked out overlapped with the one in my heart. Wh,what is the meaning of this? I, just right now, returned, so I've fallen to the level below for over a month prior. No matter how you think about it, the calculations don't match.

“H,hang on. Hakkon has always been on the Maze Level, you know? He didn't return here even once.”

The female staff member, who had her hands stolen by Ramis grabbing both of them over the counter and brought her face to face, was somehow able to maintain her business smile.

“That, to say it, actually I saw Hakkon-san's form in the community. Right?”

“Y,yeah. Yesterday I also bought something.”

The staff member seated next to her also nodded her head up and down. It doesn't



seem like the two of them are lying. But, well, if that's the case then that means that a fake of me, or rather something that is similar to me, exists.

"In other words, there be a Hakkon fake... this is a dire situation." (Hyurumi)

"Fake... we gotta complain!"

The angry Ramis seems like she's about to go flying out to do so right now, so I shoot out a "Too bad."

"Hakkon, why are you stopping me? It's a fake, you know. I won't forgive anyone who pretends to be Hakkon to do business. We have to properly complain and get them to stop."

About that; I'm extremely curious about what the other party is thinking to do this. While I was gone, did he think that he was a suitable replacement? Or was he simply thinking to make some profit by just copying me.

If it's the latter, then finding fault in it would be a mistake. Aside from copying my business strategy, wanting to make profits is natural. And besides, I'm genuinely curious about how a vending machine's functions managed to come into existence.

"Calm down Ramis. When ya don't know the opponents', it's better to not do things badly. When we report to the Bear President, how about we do some reconnaissance together?"

So Hyurumi agrees with me. In her case it's simply a scholar's approach, though.

It feels like Ramis' rage won't subside, but she seems to have reluctantly accepted it, so for now all members head over to the Bear President's room.

Bear President was searching for me, so the many days' worth of work had piled up and came back around; when he returned here he was constantly wrestling with paperwork, it seems.

"President – is it okay to enter?"

"Ramis, is it? You've returned. It is alright to enter."

At the door, the Bear President's lifeless, exhausted voice reached us.

Upon opening the door, a desk covered in a mountain of paperwork can be seen and the Bear President with a completely fed up face was there. That bear paw is skillfully grasping a pen, but I had a useless worry about whether he could properly write letters.

"Good time, I was just thinking about taking a break. Hakkon, allow me to buy a cold drink."

"Welcome."

He bought a lemon tea, sat down heavily onto the sofa, and drank the contents in one go. You can tell by looking that his exhaustion has been piling up.

"Everyone, sit down as well. Why don't you tell me the result of your request?"

Hyurumi conveyed the situation on the Maze perimeter as our representative. Also, although she hesitated a bit, she also told about the situation with Mishael without sparing anything.

"Mishael, is it? I had heard that he was an excellent Hunter, but he seems to have some deep meaning to not joining up with anyone. Let me commit this to memory."

Well, the reason is because of his communication disorder, though.

"Now then, President. Recently, were you aware of a fake Hakkon appearing in the community?"

"A fake, is it? Sorry, I've been constantly shut in this room. I've been distant from the outside world."

"Seems like a Hakkon-like thing is around, and everyone be thinking it's Hakkon. We're thinking about lookin' into it, but we gotta have the Hunters Association's approval for that?"

"No, it's fine to do as you please. Others... in this situation it's difficult to express, but Hakkon is a resident of Seiryu Lake Level. If there are ones taking a resident's name to earn benefits, then in that situation it wouldn't do to not give them punishments. As

far as a request from the Hunters Association, I would like to see through what such a person's true identity is. However, I request that you don't raise your complaint through violence. It would be enough to have no troubles if you get enough proof."

"Un, got it. I'm going to properly show you his true colors!"

Ramis tightly clenched her fist. The President stuck his claw(finger) into it so I think she won't run wild, but I'm still a little worried.

But my imitation, huh... I wonder what kind of person it is. Just a little, no, I'm really excited with curiosity. What's going to appear? Let's have some expectations.

# Chapter 55

## Fake

The Big Eaters Brigade will remain at the Bear President's side, and Ramis and Hyurumi are going to head towards investigating the enemy's movements, but for me, I want to follow along.

I'm immensely interested in the fake, after all. I want to see it for myself, not hear about it. That said, we'd be found out immediately if I'm carried in the usual vending machine state. It would probably be best if I go while hiding my features.

And so, my situation has become being put in a large sack as the <Cardboard Vending Machine>. It's my disguise, but actually, those two are also disguised.

Unlike usual, Ramis let her hair down instead of her side-ponytail and wearing a soft, wide-brimmed straw hat. Her clothes also conceal her usual vigorous atmosphere with a cardigan and long skirt; it's like she's a secluded young lady.

"I, it's weird isn't it, Hakkon? Does it suit me?"

"Welcome."

It's the exact opposite of her usual image, but coupled with her embarrassed gestures it's unbelievably adorable. Let's record this with the security camera.

"You're completely different, Ramis."

Looking hard, I see that the one who said it, Hyurumi, is also looking different.

Appropriately, she just tied back her hair in a braid along her back, and if I look at her head overall, she's wearing the hat from before.

She's wearing sleeveless clothes, but at the neckline it's a turtleneck; her body line is obvious, but... there's padding at her chest. It's more splendid than normal. From the low-rise hotpants around her butt and thighs extend slender, well-proportioned white

legs.

It's not her usual, unwholesome, slightly dirty appearance, but an outfit that looks athletic.

"Hyurumi's clothes are cool. Right, Hakkon?"

"Welcome."

"I hate this kinda thing, though."

Scratching her head, she's embarrassed for once. She's normally wearing all black and refraining from showing her skin, so I see a new charm to her. The original is good, but if only she took a little more care for her grooming, she'd be popular.

"Then, let's go spying!"

"Aa, I'm a li'l embarrassed, but shall we go?"

"Welcome."

The three of us are walking about within the community, but since a while ago I've been feeling like we're getting stared at, by both guys and girls.

The men's glances are those that reveal their desire when they're faced with great women, but the women also leak out a sigh of admiration from being charmed from time to time. Their levels are high with both genders so I understand why the lines of sight are gathering, but for reconnaissance it's the wrong disguises.

"Nee, the fake Hakkon's spot is definitely here, right?"

"Aa, the place is... look, around where that drugstore in front be, looks like."

The moment I heard that, I got a bad feeling. No, rather than a feeling it's more like a conviction. Or like, I feel like I can see the punchline of this tale.

If the Chain Restaurant is involved in this situation... then it won't be good to call them out on it. First let's go to the scene of the crime before coming to any conclusions.

As we proceeded down the main road, gradually the people increased. Right now it's

right before noon, so normally there are a lot of people who gather in front of the Hunters Association, but today there weren't that many people. It seems that they've moved over to here, I guess.

When we extracted ourselves to a spot where we could oversee the place the Chain Restaurant had been, the figure of people standing in a line jumps out clearly. Looking at the very front row, there's a giant white box. Somehow, looks like that's my fake. From this distance, you can't make out any more details.

The amount of people lined up for the products is about ten or so. The other twenty or so are eating at the chairs and tables installed outside.

"We're linin' up behind 'em."

"Un, got it."

We line up last and I observe the surroundings until it's our turn. The fake stands in a way with its back up against the wall of the former Chain Restaurant. The management of the Chain Restaurant isn't re-starting business; the shop remains closed.

It's something I realized after gradually getting closer and closer, but that fake is about two times bigger than me all around. The height is well over 2 meters, about there with the Bear President. The width and depth are also about two times mine, you know.

The color and design are close to mine, but it all gives off a cheap kind of feeling. It really feels like somebody put in a lot of effort to hand make it, but it absolutely feels like someone made it in imitation of me.

"-tto, finally, it be our turn."

My face is sticking out of the upper part of the bag, so I can see it well. Yup, it's imitating my design. But the products lined up are completely different.

Displayed on the top row of the two rows, drinks are splayed out. First, the containers are completely different. They're all glass with a cork stopper for a lid. Since the words above the switch for the product names are written in this world's letters, it seems to be a more user friendly design than mine.

“Sweet tea and water, as well as a fruit juice thing, looks like. Price be 1 silver coin, about.”

Hyurumi informs me the information with a whisper. Looks like the beverages available are ones that can be prepared in this world.

“Underneath is food, ne. There’s something with meat, and pasta, and even ingredients sandwiched in bread.”

The second row presents the food; kara’age, a ramen look alike, sandwich, and even an oden-like stew is there. They really did a great job, but can they really provide it hot when you order it?

“Right then, how ‘bout we buy a beverage and food each to try it out?”

Hyurumi pushed a silver coin into the coinslot. That shape is about the same as mine, too. The silver coin entered, but the switches didn’t light up; like this it’s hard to tell whether you can make your purchase.

“One silver coin has been received.”

Uooo-!

A voice came from the vending machine. E, so this world’s mechanisms can produce a voice recording? Hyurumi had said that it was still in research and difficult to implement, though.

“A voice recording, is it... in that case.”

She put in a second silver coin, and

“Two silver coins have been received.”

Once again a voice spoke. This time I was listening in a calm and collected manner so I realized it, but it’s a young man’s voice that sounds so real you wouldn’t think it was recorded.

Tilting her head, Hyurumi put in a third coin.

“Three silver coins have been... *\*cough\** entered.”

He choked! E, don't tell me that within this vending machine is a person. With a sneer and a sadistic grin, Hyurumi pushed down on both the tea and kara'age-ish thing at the same time.

"E-..."

Right now, that was definitely a confused man's voice. If there's someone inside, then I can come to an understanding. In this other world, vending machine mechanisms are still too difficult. But if there's a human within performing the interactions, exchanging money and offering products is possible.

In the retrieval opening, a beverage was placed, but the kara'age hasn't come out yet.

"Please wait a moment."

The person inside the vending machine said, but if the kara'age was prepared before, I'd think it would come out immediately.

And, over five minutes later, the product was placed in the retrieval opening.

What we took out of it was put on a porcelain plate, and the kara'age placed on top of it had steam rising from it. Rather than being warmed up, you can't see it as anything other than being freshly fried.

No way, they're actually preparing the food within this vending machine? No, there's no way. Even if it's bigger than me, there's no space for an adult to enter and prepare food.

"Then, I guess I'll do water and soup pasta."

The water came out immediately, but as expected, the ramen-look-alike took some time; although it came out faster than the kara'age, it still took three minutes.

The products seem to all be freshly prepared. For the equipment needed to make kara'age and ramen to be placed within seems impossible. Just what are the mechanics behind it?

The two lined up the products on a nearby table and began to eat.

"O-, it be delicious. This ain't made beforehand."

"Un, that's right. It's just ordinarily good, though, huh, this taste... it's similar to when



we ate at Chain Restaurant.”

When I heard Ramis’ opinion, a lightbulb went off. That vending machine’s location holds all the answers. The fake is related to the Chain Restaurant without a doubt.

It’s just a guess, but that vending machine’s back is open and connected to the former Chain Restaurant’s building. With the vending machine connected by a hole in the wall, when the products are purchased, they’re made within the Chain Restaurant. If I think about it that way, it doesn’t seem coherent.

That said, there’s the issue of why these opponents have gone through all this trouble, but the goal is probably stealing my customers, and also probably to harass me.

A large chain store’s reputation was overthrown by a single magical tool; the aim of this pull might be that, during the time they’re carrying out this plan, they’re buying time for preparations.

“Then, let’s go back. We’ll talk more at the tent.” (Hyurumi)

“Un, okay.”

I already understand how the fake vending machine works and who the people are pulling the strings from behind, so there’s only thinking up a counterplan now. Being copied isn’t a good feeling, but to be honest, I’m rather impressed with the amount of misplaced effort our opponents put into this business.

Like this, if I had been broken on the Maze Level, their takeover would probably have been a success. Though I think they imitated me well, it’s not at the quality where it would fool the regular customers.

In fact, there weren’t any of the regulars among the people who were buying products just now. The taste isn’t supposed to be bad, but if it’s like that, then my honest opinion is that other stores’ food and drink will satisfy as well.

The taste and quality of the street stalls and the other shops have increased due to the previous incident with my help, so it can’t be said that it’s become a situation where the Chain Restaurant has the advantage in a taste war.

If it’s like this, even if I purposefully left it alone, it feels like they’ll self-destruct. After

taking the orders, they have to cook the food skillfully or else, and since there can't be more than one vending machine, the turnover rate is also bad. It seems unlikely that they're in the black. It feels like this wasn't established to be a business.

After that, we returned to the tent the two girls are living in and the discussion began, but in the end we came to the conclusion that, wouldn't it be fine if we started up the vending machine business as normal?

And so, from the next day on I resumed business by being installed in front of the Hunters Association, and in the blink of an eye the information spread, the regulars swarmed all at once, and the products sold like they were flying off the shelves.

The chefs of the food stalls as well, they came to buy huge amounts of ingredients to restock; from dawn to dusk, there was no interruption in the wave of people. After one week had passed, when it had finally gotten to calming down, the fake vending machine had withdrawn, and after that the place where it had been set up had boards nailed to the wall.

It would be great if Chain Restaurant would give up with this, but I can't help but feel that they'll come out and make another pass at me again. I'd guess that this time's incident will have completely put me in their sights.

This is a problem with their reputation, so for a large corporation, they have no choice but to come seriously to crush me. Maa, if they lift a hand against me or my comrades, all I have to do is return the blow, though.

# Chapter 56

## Contest

Several days passed since the Fake Incident, and the days were returning to normal in the community on the Seiryu Lake Level, so I am once again participating in the conference between the restaurant shopkeepers.

“Thanks to employing a large amount of Hunters who can use Earth Magic, the community’s walls have been recovered by 90%.”

“O-, the Hunter Association was also working hard, na.”

“With the walls up, the defenses are perfect.”

When Munami, the usual moderator, clapped, the other shopkeepers also clapped their hands and applauded.

The repairs of the defenses were done quicker than they thought because, as Munami had explained, in large part due to the Hunter Association hiring a large amount of those who could use Earth Magic.

Previously it had been a wall where over half was comprised only of stakes of wood, and you would be too embarrassed to call a defense, but now a tall, sturdy earthen wall surrounds the community.

“Quiet down everyone. It seems that the defenses will be completed in another two weeks. Once safety has been secured, the community will develop more and more, and people will most likely come flooding in. And so I think we shopkeepers should hold an event, and say it’s in commemoration of the completion of the defenses.”

It must be thanks to that Chain Restaurant incident that this level’s restaurant shopkeepers are so unified. It’s great that they all work together without any hostility, na.

“I was thinking that the event should be an eating contest.”

“Aa, ‘cause Hunters eat a lot. That’ll liven things up, won’t it?”

“Ya, if we hand out a prize for the winner, we can expect participants.”

“If we take a participation fee, then our side won’t go into the red, neither.”

An eating contest, huh? It’s simple so the rules are easy to understand, too; looks like it’ll do well.

“About that, is food that will easily fill the stomach good?”

“How about making sweet things particularly for the female side?”

“On the other hand, if we have food that’s easy to eat, the spectators of the eating contest might be happier.”

Various opinions flew about and a lively discussion unfolded. Last time they were all just relying on me, but looking at how things are going as they get excited by themselves, I’m relieved.

-tte, talking about them like I’m above them is a rude thing to do. Even though I’m just borrowing the power of the products from inside a vending machine.

“Then we’ll be aiming for the event to be held in two weeks, so we’ll have the oddities store shopkeeper make us pamphlets and posters. Everyone, let’s get excited!”

“O—!”

While gazing at the shopkeepers who pump their fists into the air, am I really needed here... is what I’m thinking. They didn’t ask me for my opinion even once, so it’s a bit lonely.

While watching the excited shopkeepers – really, why did they bring me here?



It’s been several days since then, but within the community, things have been turned topsy-turvy with the preparations for the event.

The event grounds has been decided to be the square in front of the Hunter Association, and the work on setting it up has also progressed. Although we're in the middle of rebuilding, there seems to be an excess of carpenters, so even though they were limited to how many could work on it a day, a frightfully splendid stage was put up.

Posters that stated the eating contest was going to be held were posted everywhere, and flyers were also distributed. Looks like the excitement has reached a climax as we near the appointed day.

For the participants, each store is providing rewards, so if you slide into the top five places, it seems you can win quite a nice prize. From the gossip, I've heard that there's armor from the armor shop, a full set of Hunter tools from the tool shop, and other things that anyone would want if they're a Hunter are lined up as prizes.

Thanks to that, the participant candidates for the eating contest are increasing day by day, and the sponsors raised a delighted scream, and besides that,

"Hakkon-san, lend us your power!"

Once again I was invited to a joint meeting, but the shopkeepers, raising a real scream instead of a delighted scream, clung to me in tears.

Each and every one of them had hollow looks, so it's like a herd of zombies is closing in on me.

"H, hang on, you're scaring Hakkon!"

"Ya old men, calm yourselves."

Pacified by Ramis and Hyurumi, who came along with me, the shopkeepers somehow calmed down and returned.

"And so, what'cha askin' Hakkon for? I heard the preparations for the eating contest are goin' well."

"Un, un. I'm also looking forward to participating." (Ramis)

"That is, Ramis. Certainly the participants were increasing and it was going well. Yes, it was going well... it was. Until we learned of THEIR participation."

Here, Munami spaced out her words while staring seriously at Ramis.

“They” came? What I associate with those disturbing words, for some reason, are people who would slip in like assassins and harass us. The ones who come to mind is the Chain Restaurant.

“In the eating contest, the contest destroyers, vacuum-girl Shui and the Big Eaters Brigade, are participating.”

Munami opened her mouth once again, and when I heard her declaration, all of a sudden I understood how they were driven into a corner.

Regarding the appetite of Shui, the one and only big eater girl from The Fools of Whimsy Brigade, I can attest to it from the number of coins she’s sunk into me. On any given day she’ll easily put away three times that of a normal person and,

“It’s easier to move if my stomach is only half full -ssu.” (Shui)

If that girl, who can make such a big claim with a completely calm expression, participates, it’s not inconceivable that it would make the shopkeepers tremble.

And on top of her, add the participation of the four members of the Big Eaters Brigade; those guys’ stomachs aren’t normal at all. Previously, when these five ate and drank seriously, they got refills at least three times.

About Tasmanian devils, it seems like it’s possible for them to eat half their weight. Although they’re petite, their body weight is about 50 kilos. If that’s the case, it means they can easily eat past 20 kilos if they go at it seriously. With four such bodies participating, well, yeah, it can’t be helped if the shopkeepers are terrified.

There’s a participation fee, but if it’s like this it won’t be enough at all with these five mixed in.

“Like this, rather than a deficit, we’ll be bankrupt! No matter how much food there will be, it won’t be enough!”

“If the Big Eaters Brigade participates, even the kitchen scraps from the ingredients won’t be left...”

“In the end, even though everyone unified and worked hard, with this, it’s all over.”

In despair, the shopkeepers dropped to the ground, beating it with their fists, and kept glancing over at me with flattering looks. I seem to have memories of a similar experience from before, you know. For now, you can stop this little farce.

“So basically it’s that. Ya want Hakkon to make a plan to deal with the five big eaters and provide supplies, na.”

As if they had practiced before, the shopkeepers nodded their heads up and down in perfect sync.

To satisfy those big eaters, you’ll have to let them eat a large amount of stuff; otherwise you’ll have give them something filling either beforehand or during.

There’s that, na; I wonder if making the drink a beverage with carbonation in them will do. If you make the items for the big eaters have a heavy taste or spicy, they will get thirstier more easily, and their intake of the carbonated beverage will increase.

So thinking, I dropped a 2-liter of cola into the retrieval bin. Ramis took the cola and placed it on top of the table; the shopkeepers gathered around, but they didn’t know what it was so they tilted their heads.

“Uuum, see, this is a drink that has a funny sensation going down the throat, like bubbly and stuff.” (Ramis)

“I like ta’ drink it, but this guy’s sweet and fills your stomach. Ain’t Hakkon trying to say that if ya offer this drink with the food, the amount they eat will go down? How ‘bout it, Hakkon?”

“Welcome.”

Even after hearing the two’s explanation it seems they don’t get it, so Ramis poured it in cups and handed it out to everyone. Even though they accepted the cups, as they stared at it, no one brought it to their mouths.

Their shoulders flinched again and again as they were surprised by the bubbles that came up bursting. Unwilling to watch the shopkeepers like that, Hyurumi drained hers all at once.

“Kuhaa, I’m gonna get addicting to this popping stimulation in my throat.”

The shopkeepers, seeing her wiping her mouth after drinking it deliciously, had their curiosities stimulated, and, although it was just one mouthful, everyone took some in.

“Whoa, what’s this, this sensation?”

“It’s like something is bursting in my mouth. I feel like the taste is too sweet, but thanks to the fizziness, it’s easy to drink.”

“I might like this.”

Looks like the opinions are largely favourable. Just, there will probably be people who don’t like it, so that’s probably going to be the main problem.

“I wonder if the participants won’t complain if we replace the water with this.”

“A-, yeah. For me, this is kinda not good.”

“If that’s the case, then it would be fine to let them choose if they want this or water?”

“No no, like that it’s obvious that the ones who drink water are at an advantage.”

The rest is up to the shopkeepers. Since earlier they’ve changed gears and large amounts of opinions and suggestions are coming up, so I think they’re fine now.

When Ramis and Hyurumi, who had been accompanying us as bystanders all this time, were sipping milk tea, a counter-plan had been decided.

The participants of the eating contest will be offered water or cola, and it doesn’t matter which they choose. Like that, those who choose water will be at an advantage, but that is also an interesting hand to consider.

Before the day of the contest, each store will have cola, selling small amounts for high prices. The idea is that, by doing so, a large amount of participants will choose cola over water if they know they can drink cola for free on the day of the contest.

Isn’t that a brilliant move? If they’re seriously going for victory they should choose water, but they’re not professional eaters or anything. It can’t be helped to lose to



temptations in front of you.

“And so, Hakkon-san. We’d be ever so grateful if you provided it to us at a reasonable price...”

I can’t help but have a wry grin towards the shopkeepers who are petitioning me while rubbing their hands, but I had the intention of selling it to them at a price to avoid them from incurring deficits to begin with, so I acknowledged it with, “Welcome.” With this the preliminary preparations have been made. Now I’ll just be looking forward to the day of the contest.

# Chapter 57

## On the Day of the Eating Contest

*Shui's way of speaking has been changed.*

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It's a complete success, huh? Underneath the clear skies, many people are forming a line in order to receive the proof of participation for the eating contest. The participants are men and women of all ages, and the races are also all over the place; from this we can see the effects of the advertisement done up until now.

In the end the tournament's dish was decided to be karaage (meat battered and fried in small portions), but the number of participants slightly surpassed expectations so the Hunters were mobilized in order to obtain the ingredients.

At the kitchen set up behind the assembly grounds, the meat of a mountain of animals, to the extent that you worried that all the animals in the area around the community were hunted out, were being fried one after another.

Come to think of it, the person in charge of the preparations was muttering something before. What was it; I think it was...

"A-, we don't have enough meat. What should we do? All the animals in the area have been hunted. Meat, meat, mea... O-, we do have that. I think previously, it was brought back from the subjugation."

'That' is, don't tell me it's frogmen demons or alligatormen demons... a, no, it's common sense to eat monster meat in this world, na. It's no good to push the ethics of a Japanese person on them, right.

It seems like more than enough meat of various things, and they're asking whether you'd like cola or water as we'd discussed, but as expected there are a lot of people who want cola.

The problematic ones, the vacuum-girl Shui and the Big Eaters Brigade, all preferred cola so we've cleared the first stage, so to speak.

“Hakkon, you’re going to be in charge of providing the drinks at the eating contest all day today, right?” (Ramis)

“Welcome.”

That’s right, today my job is to be in a corner of the stage, replenishing the cola when it starts running out. The participants surpass 50 people, so the consumption of cola, as well as kara’age, will be rather large.

The flavor of the karaage is also heavy, as per Ramis’ proposal, so there’s no doubt that they’ll get thirstier than usual.

“Okay then, I also have to do the participation procedures so I’ll set you on the stage ahead of time, okay?”

“Welcome.”

Although I’m on the edge of the stage, she set me up in a spot that stands out.

There aren’t just a few people who have interest in me, the local vending machine, but are too afraid to reach their hand out, so I should also have the goal to appeal that I’m convenient and safe in the event this time. Is what the Bear President said.

Because the stage is one level higher I can survey the spectators’ seats and the surroundings, but even at this point in time there’s a long line in front of the person in charge of handing out participation proofs.

Towards the very back is Ramis, and ahead of her the Big Eaters’ Brigade is assembled. Shui isn’t the only one from the Fools of Whimsy Brigade; the Red-White twins are also participating.

There are probably other acquaintances among the participants. The two gatekeepers look like they’d come out for it. And then the currency-exchange official Goggai might also come. Those with the muscular, reverse-triangle body shape really do look like they’d be big eaters. Looks like you can’t list just one person as the victor-candidate.

My four early-morning regulars are among the crowd taking their places in the spectators’ seats. When I look around roughly, I notice that here and there are customers that regularly use the vending machine.

For some reason everyone's gazes are concentrated on me, but it seems to be divided into two groups; people who are staring at me because I'm a rare object or people who are staring suspiciously because they're wondering why I'm here.

As this unbearable situation is going on, the meeting venue is being set up, and it seems that the chairs and tables setup has been completed. On top of the enormous stage, long tables are lined up end to end and over twenty chairs placed.

With the setup done, the moderator and facilitator, the inn's poster girl Munami, came over to my corner up on stage. So her outfit is her usual maid-esque apron-skirt. More like, I can't think of a time when I've seen her in casual clothes, na.

"Thanks for waiting, everyone! And now the first ever Seiryu Lake Level's eating contest will begin!"

Cheers and applause rose up from the spectator seats. The spectators' seats are also pretty much full. The majority are spectators who have bought things from the food carts set up around the meeting venue.

Watching an eating contest while hungry is a torturous thing, after all. Looks like we can expect great things from the stalls' earnings.

"The participants have exceeded our expectations, so they have been separated into the First Block and the Second Block; the top five of each block will proceed to the finals where the final battle will be held. We have prepared fabulous rewards for the victor, so contestants, do your best."

"Uooooo-!"

On the outskirts of the venue, a deep voice resonated. The contestants' excitement is also drawing to a frenzy.

"Now then, will all the contestants for the First Block please enter!"

Within the droves of men coming out, the four members of the Big Eaters Brigade also appeared. So Shui and Ramis are in the Second Block. I can't see them among the contestants. Or like, having only men is painful.

At a rough glance, the man that's over 2 meters tall, with an overabundant girth, looks

strong, but I know the Big Eaters Brigade's appetite so it's questionable whether he can win against that.

"The time limit is until all the sand in this hourglass has fallen."

A giant hourglass is placed directly opposite me; so that's taking the place of a stopwatch.

Piles of karaage served on large plates are placed in front of the contestants. That amount alone probably surpasses 2 kilos.

"Naturally, in the instance where you eat it all before time's up, you get to move on. And with that, are you ready? Let the eating contest... begin!"

The contests all simultaneously threw the steaming karaage into their mouths.

"Hot-, hoot"

*"hafu hafu hafu"*

They were just fried, so the meat juices are probably spilling out within their mouths. The large men clutch their mouths in agony. There were quite a few men who used the cola poured in mugs in order to combat the heat.

The house-favorite Big Eaters Brigade are... facing upwards blowing hot air from their mouths. Animals are bad with heat, after all. Sorry for think it, but their appearance like this is adorably soothing.

They forcibly cool it by chugging cola, but that method fills your stomach suddenly with carbonation, so I wonder if they'll be fine. A-, would it be better for the planning committee if the Big Eaters Brigade dropped out here? I have mixed feelings about this.

The Big Eaters Brigade are good customers, and we have some sort of fate connecting us, so personally I want them to do their best.

The first plan the shopkeepers thought up, the Hot and Steamy Operation, was a success, and a large amount of cola is being drunk. In addition, the shopkeepers are buying ice-cold, chilled cola from me.

When I looked at the hourglass, half of the sand had fallen down; there should be

people who finished eating it all popping up pretty soon.

“I ate it all-“

“I’m also done.”

“Me too-“

“I am also finished here.”

All of the Big Eaters Brigade raised their hands sharply at roughly the same time. Even though it’s as expected, all four of them passed, huh? The shopkeepers applauded, but if you look closely you can see their faces twitching.

It’s the truth that some troublesome fellows have risen up.

“I have also finished eating.”

O-, Goggai-san also finished. With this, the five people who’ve passed have been decided. It was faster than I expected.

“The passers have been decided before the time has run out. Contestants, it is fine to take the leftover food with you. We will also provide you with containers to do so.”

For being planned around big eaters, it’s a kind design. They’re providing containers to stuff the leftover food in, even though they’re contestants who haven’t passed and are still eating.

“Now then, it’s the entrance of the contestants of the Second Block of the eating contest!”

Different from the First Block, the ones who appeared from the wings of the stage were largely women. There’s the favorite, Shui, as well, but Ramis is also there. She appears waving her hand in a lively manner.

Ramis’ constitution would put her among the big eaters, but if you compare her to Shui, it’s unthinkable that she’d win. Aside from them, there are a number of other female hunters participating. Since I’m set in the spot in front of the Hunters Association, I’ve more or less memorized the faces of the hunters that enter and exit. They might have increased the proportion of women in the Second Block in order to

have a better chance of increasing the visual appeal of the finals.<sup>1</sup>

“Now then, the Second Block of the eating contest begins!”

With that declaration the contestants proceeded to devour karaage. The repeat of people who were done in with the heat of the karaage and chugged cola was exactly like the previous one.

Shui originally drank cola willingly, so she calmly drank cola while stuffing her face deliciously with karaage. It's to her credit that she eats so deliciously, I guess. With a hand on her cheek and a look of bliss on her face, she's chewing splendidly.

The amount of meat reduces as you watch. It looks like Shui takes big bites and doesn't chew many times. She's the fastest by far, compared to the other contestants.

“It was delicious-!”

Before even half the sand had fallen in the hourglass, our Shui finished eating and downed the rest of her cola in a flash. She was even faster than each of the members of the Big Eaters Brigade.

“I have also finished.”

Immediately afterwards a hand went up, but the second place was a lady wearing a suit-like outfit and black-rimmed glasses — no way, it's the money-exchanger Akoui. Shui and Akoui, they seem to be the people many women envy, being slim but able to eat a lot.

Quite a bit afterwards, the next contestant who moves on appeared.

“I, I finished-. It was tasty.”

Ramis rubbed her belly, somehow managing to finish eating. The other two people were also decided, but they're people I haven't seen before. They're probably citizens who recently came to this level and haven't gone near the Hunters Association.

“With this, the contestants who will be appearing in the finals are decided! The finals will begin two hours later, so everyone, please wait for a short while. Once the stage has been cleaned up, the theatrical group's play will begin. Please purchase food and drinks from the food stall and watch it.”

So there's also a play; it's a standard event. I haven't heard of this theater troupe being in the community, so that means they must have hired them for this eating contest, huh?

"Hakkon, I'm moving you down from the stage. You'd be in the way of the play, ne."  
(Ramis)

"Welcome."

If there's a vending doing his best to sell placed there, it will have an uncomfortable effect on the play. I'll obediently let myself be carried down.

"Do you want to watch the play, Hakkon?"

U-n, I wonder what I should do. I'm interested in the play, but I've been bad with watching plays since forever ago. Somehow, it's different from TV, where I become worried over whether the actors will make a mistake. I know it's an unneeded sentiment, but I'll get all nervous and the contents of the play don't enter my head.

I think the reason is that, back when I was a kid I went to see a Hero Show aimed at kids, and an accident happened and the person inside the costume was exposed, and everything became chaotic in front of the audience's eyes.

A-, but, I really am curious. In this world where there's little entertainment, it seems that the theater troupe's abilities would be high, so it'll be fine, na.

"Welcome."

"Looks like you're interested, ne. Then let's watch it together, ok?"

"O-, you two are going to watch it? Then me too." (Hyurumi)

So Hyurumi also came. When I heard her voice and looked towards over my shoulder, Hyurumi was wearing her usual black clothes, both hands full of food from the food stalls. She looks like she's doing nothing but enjoying the festivities.

"Ramis, want something to eat?"

"No way, no way. My stomach's completely full, so nothing else will enter."



Looks like I shouldn't hold any expectations of her for the finals in two hours. Just with the amount of karaage you ate, of course it's like that. Rather, I should be praising you for doing your best.

The spectators' seat was about seventy percent filled, but there's a corner in the back row that's open, so that's where we set ourselves. Since I'm with them, if we don't go to the edge then the people behind me won't be able to see a thing, so it's necessary to be careful regarding the location.

Now, shall I allow myself to be entertained by this other world's play?

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1. literally, to pursue beauty(like a flower, usually indirectly regarding maidens); I translated it for the slight sarcastic dig, which is why it's a bit off. Having to choose between literal-ness versus tone can be a bit of a headache, especially with a subtly sarcastic character like Hakkon.

# Chapter 58

## Victors and Prizes

It seems like the preparations for the play have been made, so I should fix my posture – I have a body with a back that constantly stretches perfectly straight, so I’m fine, na. What’s left is to be sure to stand quietly so you don’t hinder the play.

“O-, if it ain’t Hakkon. Watcha doing hereabouts?”

“Let’s make it cold tea today.”

-tte, to think that the two gatekeepers would come along with this kind of timing. The play began so I don’t want to make noise, but here is where I can show off my Dexterity in dampening the sound of my product-dropping technique. Dealing with it like I’m cradling a baby, laying it softly in its crib with the tenderness of a mother’s love, I softly place the product in the retrieval opening. Alright, I pretty much made no noise. I’m a person – vending machine than can do it if he tries.

“What’s today’s play supposed to be?”

“Let’s see, I think...”

-tte, so Karios and Gols also wanted to watch the play here. They said it in small voices so as not to disturb the surroundings, and it seems like it could also be fun to discuss your impressions. As for me, I welcome that.

“The schedule they handed out earlier said... the title seems to be ‘The Field That Calls Happiness.’ Haven’t heard of it.”

What the heck is a field that calls happiness supposed to be? I don’t have even a clue. Even the knowledgeable Hyurumi doesn’t know, so it’s either a little-known niche thing or an original creation.

I bet it’s something like a story about agriculture. A beautiful girl does her best to plow

a field and distributes the vegetables she raises to everyone to make them happy. Something like that.

For me, I'd prefer unprecedented, other-worldly action sequences, but if a love-romance starts, I don't think I'd have it in me to keep watching. Looks like it'd be better not to set my expectations too high.

"Maa, we'll figure it out if we watch it. O-, looks like it's starting."

That's true. Before watching it, of course we'll end up considering all sorts of things. As a spectator, all I need to do is enjoy it.



"It was, um, there was a lot of things that were unexpected..."

"To think that would have happened there..."

"Un, it's certainly a field that calls happiness, ne? A, but rather than calling it, it's more like it'll come over..."

Everyone gave their impressions about this and that and various things with dumbfounded expressions.

My blunt opinion is that it's definitely another world, na. This was the best I've seen. To think that the protagonist wasn't human, but it was like that. As a general comment, I thought it was fun, but it seems like it's a topic that some people will like and others won't.

The quality of the play was also high, so if the same troupe goes on to put on a different play, then I'd like to watch it.

"-tte, this ain't the time ta be dazed. Ramis, you're going to be in the finals, right?"  
(Hyurumi)

"Aa, that's right! Hakkon, let's go!"

"Welcome."

I was given a ride and carried lightly by Ramis.

“Ramis, good luck! I’ll be cheering for you” (Hyurumi?)

“Keep it in moderation, na.” (Gols)

“Show us the willpower of a woman!” (Karios?)

Receiving the good will of the three people, Ramis raised her fist. Although, because there’s a vending machine, Hyurumi and the others can’t see it.

Setting me in the corner of the stage, Ramis immediately ran off to the place where the contestants were waiting. I know she’s in a hurry, but it’s not good to be in such a fluster.

“Aa-, s,sorry.”

I heard the sound of a crash and a scream, but let’s not ask about what happened.

The stages preparations were also done, and the presiding announcer, Munami, also stood on the stage. Looks like the finals are about to start. The spectator seats are around sixty percent full, perhaps there were a lot of people satisfied with watching the first half’s battles, but the numbers are a bit reduced.

I’d like to up the excitement and increase the people, but what can I do for a method to gather people? I guess there’s nothing I can do. It’d be nice if there was some useful functions for this, though.

Casting my eyes over the functions that had increased in number when I became Rank 2, I discovered an interesting function. If I use this, it looks like I can attract customers and liven the place up.

I select and operate the <Jukebox> from the function list.

“And now, it’s the entrance of the contestants!”

The spectators are all pretty much focused on the announcer, Munami, so it seems they didn’t notice that I had sneakily transformed.

I’ve become smaller than the usual vending machine, and my top has become rounded. Around my borders are two plastic-like fluorescents emitting yellow light. I can tell

that, rather than the usual drinks and food, in exchange the insides of my body have hundreds of records installed.

It's a machine that old cafes and bars used to have installed, where you can put in coins to listen to the music you'd like, but for people in their 20s to 40s, you'd be more familiar with the jukeboxes installed in bowling alleys that would let you listen to the latest music.

By the way, the jukebox is definitely a splendid example of a vending machine, but there are a lot of people who don't recognize it as such. Of course, as a vending machine maniac, whenever I'd catch sight of one I'd play music.

The contestants have gotten onstage, so I try playing the classics, music that are staples of sports events. As expected, entrance music should be like this.

I didn't dare to choose the newest ones but the old types, since the classics are ones that have been perfected.

"E-, where is this music coming from?"

The spectators seem to think it's part of the production, but Munami and the other officials are bewildered. Even so, without panicking or making a fuss, the announcer, Munami, continued onwards; I admire her guts of steel. <sup>1</sup>

If it's this girl who's experienced all sorts of things first hand, her ability to adapt should be fine, so let's put everything I have into being responsible for the acoustics.

"Everyone, are you excited yet?! Whether it ends in tears or laughter, this is it! Contestants, please eat to your hearts' conte-nt!"

Was it the BGM's effect? Munami exploded. Not to be outdone, let's choose a more exciting song with a faster tempo.

"The battle in the finals is determined by the amount you eat within the time limit! Fling open the doors and surpass your limits... then, let the finals begin!"

I change the music at the same time as her declaration. I play music that's often used for races and relays at a loud volume. Listening to that music seems to increase your sense of excitement. The contestants' eating speed has also risen considerably.

I might have stirred them up a bit too much, but there are people with healing magic

and divine blessings, so that unlikely possibility (eating to death) probably won't happen.

It's only just begun, but as expected the vacuum-girl Shui and the four-man group from the Big Eaters Brigade are flying since the opening. Ramis doesn't have the intensity from the previous half; looks like she's taking her time and enjoying the food.

The other members seem to understand that they can't win against those five, but they undauntedly continue eating. When those five flattened the heap of karaage, what appeared next was a giant crepe that you could easily wrap an infant in.

In the finals, first a heap of karaage is put out, then when you've finished eating it, next is a giant crepe waiting. With your stomach bulging, it's sweets; the so-called final blow. I think it's a composition to give both a mental and physical blow.

By the way, the crepe's contents are apples and bananas that I provided packed in as if it wasn't already enough. I provided the apples with a vending machine that exclusively sells apples, and bananas with a banana exclusive vending machine.

There's a fruit version of the vegetable vending machine, but I'd like you to understand my pickiness about choosing to become the exclusive vending machines at this instance.

By the way, I found the apple vending machine on the second floor of the Shin-Osaka station. They didn't just have cut apples, but also versions with them in chocolate, honey, and caramel; there were all sorts of variations, so I have fun memories about it.

With the giant crepe in front of them, the men look weary, but the color of the women's eyes changed.

"Mu-, sweets-! An', ain't that lookin' way delicious-!"

Ramis, your accent's come out.

"With that, I shall have to partake, shan't I?"

The eyes and lenses of the glasses of Akioi in the seat next to her appeared to glint.

I wonder why women have this reaction even with this kind of sweet. It's mysterious

as to whether it's because it's a different world or because we're within a dungeon, but sugar and fruits are precious.

This level that offers such sweets so cheaply must seem like heaven to sweets-loving women and men; recently there's been a rumor that workers and hunters have been coming to Seiryu Lake level with their goal as sweets.

Ramis and Akioi's eating speeds have visibly quickened. Looks like they'll be eating up their karaage.

Shui, with her mouth sticky from the cream, is eating it while wholeheartedly smiling, but the men of the Big Eaters Brigade opened the crepe up and ate the fruit inside first. The lone woman of the brigade, Suko, bites into it as is, though.

With this vigor, it looks like it's become a one-on-one between Shui and Suko. When I checked the hourglass, 70% of the sand had fallen. The men are pretty much annihilated, and even the Big Eaters Brigade's men are having a tough fight with the whipped cream and crepe skin.

A-, they've eaten all the karaage, Ramis and Akioi have. Right now, they're blissfully savoring the crepe. With this, they've completely forsaken the match and have entered an after-meal tea time.

Shui and Suko appear to be evenly matched. If they keep going like this, they'll polish off the giant crepe before time's up.

With everyone involved's hot stares fixed on it, right before all the sand fell in the hourglass, a hand still grasping a fork was heroically raised.

"I ate it all!"

Her mouth smeared in cream, with a satisfied smile, it's Shui. The winner of the eating contest has been determined to be the Fools of Whimsy Brigade's Shui.

The eating contest safely ended without any major problems, and the top three winners are on the podium being handed their prizes.

First place is Shui. Second place is Suko. Third place is the sole male, Goggai, who slipped in.

I have returned to the usual vending machine to watch, since I have a time limit.

"Now then, the champion's prize is the right to be treated freely by Hakkon-san for a day!"

Something terrible came from Munami's mouth.

Excuse me? E, what was that?

Munami came close and whispered close to me, who was bewildered.

"Previously, you DID say that you'd help with anything concerning the prize, right?"

This would be where I want to play dumb, but... I do have memories of not saying anything, and thus agreeing by silence.

"Too ba-."

"You can't pretend you don't know this late in the game."

*Ku-*, she cut off my words. But, well, around a day won't matter so much. Even though she's a big eater who might have even been aiming for my products, I already know about the expenses.

There's nothing I have to think too hard about. I ended up accepting it with those kind of light feelings, but... that I would regret this decision in the distant future is something that the current me didn't know.

I just wanted to try saying that, but there's probably not going to be any problems.

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1. Perhaps 'big balls' would have been a bit more accurate, but Munami's a chick, and it doesn't really have a vulgar tone, so...
  2. I did tweak Munami's words to sound more announcer-ppoi.



# Chapter 59

## The Starting Level

“And so, Hakkon’s is mine for the whole day today-!”

I’ve been had. The next day after the eating contest, as promised I was rented out to Shui for the day, but the place she took me to early in the morning was... the tent that’s the Fools of Whimsy Brigade’s base.

Oh yeah, after the eating contest, the drink vendors and food merchants and the like earnestly apologized to me, na. Saying that the tension was way too high, and in order to keep it up, they forcefully made me the prize.

They said that all the expenses today will be reimbursed, but I politely refused. It’s my fault for replying when I wasn’t properly listening to the discussion.

“How nice~. Shui, I’m way jealous! Right, Red?”

“All you can eat and all you can drink-! Unfair, right White?”

The Red-White twins seem earnestly jealous from the bottoms of their hearts, and they’re staring fixedly at Shui and me. Towards those two, Shui stick out her chest in pride.

“Well done, Shui. If the time limit is a day, then we can even go monster hunting, na.”

“That’s true, Leader. If we are able to have Hakkon-san help with our arrangements, then we can go for rarer things—“

“Leader, Vice-Leader, Hakkon’s is mine, you know? Not lendings him.”

So she has no intention on joining in on Leader Keryoil and Vice-Leader Felmina’s proposals.

“Hakkon and I’s is going to the Starting Level on a date together.”

E-, really? First I heard of it. Or like, where's the Starting Level?

"So you intend to take him to the first level. There, is... I get it, na. Well then, see ya. We're working on getting Hakkon's promise to help us anyway. I'll give up for today."

"Un, un. In the first place, today's is the day I gets to monopolize him, after all."

"But ya know, Shui, I don't think there will be even a chance of it happening, but if you go ahead and kidnap or sell Hakkon, you'll get what's coming to you. We're the Fools of Whimsy Brigade. We follow the pact of never selling out our comrades. That's the Brigade's law."

Leader Keryoil's eyes narrowed and his voice grew increasingly threatening. If I look carefully, the facial expressions of the other members have all disappeared, and they're looking at Shui with a cold light in their eyes.

They're usually guys who have an air of always screwing around about them, but it now feels like the air has become stiff and stifling. Rather than saying it's not like them, this might be their true forms.

"I gots it, Leader. I'm the one who shot that idiot that time, you know. I don'ts got any intention of betraying comrades."

"That's true. Then, go have fun for the day. And lastly, don't forget to come back bringing us souvenirs."

"Then, the fizzy drink and stew!" (Red/White)

"Let's see, then the Zyugiuma fried snack and sweet, cold tea!" (White/Red)

"The yellow soup for me, please." (Felmina)

"Gots it-. If I remembers, I'll buys it -."

Leaving that proud, parting report, Shui moved to the tent's entrance. And then, turning to look at me with a broad smile, she lightly bowed her head.

"And so's, Hakkon, Ramis, 's it okay to come arounds with me?"

“It’s okay~. Hakkon and I are basically one and the same, ne-.”

“Welcome.”

I by myself can’t move satisfactorily, so like we’re fated, Ramis comes with me in a set.

I didn’t want to bother her so I had thought to have the wheels underneath so Shui can somehow or other transport me, but after going 5 meters she gave up the idea.

Although she’s a hunter, for a single woman to push a vending machine is quite the heavy labor, so in the end it became set for Ramis to help. Even though, if I just had legs I could move by myself... but if a vending machine sprouted legs and started walking around by itself, it would be queer enough to make a fuss. The visual is way too severe.

“I’m offs-“

And so, I’m going to spending all day today with Shui and Ramis.



We boarded the Hunters Association’s transfer circle, and for the second time I experienced the transfer. This sensation makes me think of roller coasters; I don’t think I’ll get to like it.

When the light from the transfer circle faded it’s a stone-made room, so it’s not all that different from the room the transfer circle was in on the Seiryu Lake Level.

When the door was opened it was the outdoors, so it looks like this is just a small room to put the transfer circle in.

Here is a strange place. It’s gloomy, or like the sky is a stone ceiling, and there’s no sunlight shining at all. The ceiling height seems to be around 10 meters from the ground.

Normally it wouldn’t be weird if it was pitch black, but the place where the community has settled has the light of torches and magic tools as lamps, so our field of vision is more than well secured.

Giving a look around at the surroundings, there are houses made of wood and stone lined up one after another, and the foot traffic is also intense. This high density population is well above Seiryu Lake's community.

"It's been awhile since I've come to the Starting Level, na-. How nostalgic."

"I come quite a lots."

Compared to the restless Ramis, Shui is smiling gently. The girl who's usually not interested in anything other than food seems like a different person.

She seems to have already decided on the destination, so without any hesitation she proceeds down the main street with quick steps. Ramis turns her head here and there, looking at the houses along the streets, trying not to separate from her.

I understood it after surveying our surroundings, but this place the houses are lined up in is a giant cave, feeling like they forcibly turned it into a community. It's almost like a village that was made in a dungeon... no, communities within a dungeon should originally have this sort of form, huh?

Seiryu Lake Level and the Maze Level are the abnormal ones; normally it would be bare rock ceilings and walls. Furthermore, it's a dungeon so of course there shouldn't be any light. I have been poisoned by that level, and the common sense within me has been broken down.

"Shui, where are you aiming to go?"

"Towards the inner part, the area wheres the poor people gather."

That's all she told us, and afterwards she didn't say a word, silently continuing to walk onwards.

A place where poor people gather. I wonder if it's something like a slum. In a place like that, it's common sense that the public order will be bad. I'm pretty sure that she has no intentions on leading us into a trap, but for cautions sake, I'll remain alert.

The neighborhood around the transfer circle was made of proper, sound buildings, but around here are dilapidated houses, or more like buildings on the level where you're wondering if it's not alright to call them ruins.

If it's Ramis' super-strength, she'd just have to lightly poke them to change them into rubble.

"O-kay, we've arriveds."

So saying, behind the girl who had turned to speak to us was an old, worn out, abandoned mansion. Over half of the one-story mansion is surrounded by a crumbling, stone fence. At first glance, it's like, how many years has it been abandoned without people living in it, but here and there are places that have been repaired. There are also no weeds growing in the garden; clearly there have been human hands at work.

"Everyones, I'm baaaaaack!"

When Shui called towards the mansion, the double doors were forcefully flung open, and children flooded out from it one after another. Their ages are... the youngest is probably two, and the oldest is somewhere above ten, I think. The whole group easily surpasses ten members.

"A-, it's really Shui nee-chan!"

"Welcome back-, presents?"

"Nee-chan, let's play, let's play!"

In the blink of an eye, Shui is surrounded by the kids pulling at her sleeves. I can tell with just one look at the scene of the kids smiling wholeheartedly that they truly missed her.

"I'm back. Looks like everyone's doing wells, ne. Nee-chan's happy. Playing's gotta wait. Where's the Principal?"

"Principal is cleaning! Principal-! Shui ne-chan came back-!"

"Yes, yes. I can hear you. Welcome back, Shui."

The one who came out a bit later than the children was a single, thin woman. See the wrinkles around her mouth and the corners of her eyes, she's in her fifties. Looking at her, she's a gentle person with a calm smile overflowing with kindness; she strokes

the heads of the children who come running over.

She's wearing a white kerchief over her hair and loose, navy-blue robe-like outfit. It's clothes that look like a nun's.

"I'm backs, Principal."

"Indeed, welcome back, Shui. Is the person behind you with the luggage your friend?"

"Un, basicallys. A comrade in the same line of works."

'Oh my, so it was like that. Welcome. Before we end up standing around and talking, please come in."

"Oka-y, I'll be intru... is it going to be okay with Hakkon inside?"

A-, it does feel like the floor could give way. Here it would be better if we prioritize safety and set me up outside, I suppose.

"Too bad."

"Right? Then, I'll put Hakkon at the entrance. Umm, Principal, please wait a moment. Kids, gather up--"

When Ramis set me in place, she turned around and beckoned to the kids. The kids were confused, but Shui also waved her hand at them, so they felt reassured and came running.

I understand what she wants to do, so I reorganize the products I had lined up a little.

"Everyone, this box is a magic box! If there's something lined up here that you wants, you push this part sticking out. Today, Nee-chan gets the promise to be ables to use him freely, so's you don't need to hold back."

"What's this round one?"

"This is a sweet fruits juice drink. As for Nee-chan, I likes this black fizzy one."

"What's this one? What's this one?"

"This one's a snack. It's a little sours, but it's tasty, sees--"

The gentle girl gently giving the explanations, and the frolicking children happily grabbing the products that fell. Watching them, a vending machine can't help but give some extra service.

Making sure that drinks, snacks, and food had been passed out among all of them, I did a form change. My body was mostly yellow, and within my center a lot of balloons of all colors before they'd been filled with air were lined up.

"E, what's that? What's that?"

O, the kids are peeping in. And now, I begin filling balloons with gas. The kids were startled and pulled back a step, but their curiosity won out and they were staring hard at the balloons.

When the filled balloons had strings attached to them, Ramis took them out and distributed them to the children. Delighted with light and floaty balloons, the kids ran around grasping the strings.

I had shown my balloon selling form once before and given them to Ramis and the Big Eaters Brigade who wanted the balloons, and they had also been delighted that time. The kids' reactions were within expectations.

The Principal and Shui watched over the frolicking children. They have their hands full with the kids. It looks like I'll be spending the whole day with the kids today, but days like these aren't bad.

# Chapter 60

## The Orphanage and the Vending Machine

The high-spirited kids are playing together with Ramis and Shui. In the first place, they have an innocence to them so they are very compatible with kids, so it's a given that they'd get along.

Right now the kids are running away from the shower made by me who's become the <Pressure Washer><sup>1</sup>. Of course the one operating it is Ramis, though.

The kids, exhausted from playing, go to enter the house while soaking wet, but they freeze in front of the Principal standing in the doorway with her arms crossed and a smile on her face.

"And just where does everyone think they're going, dripping wet and covered in mud?"

"E, Principal."

"Take your clothes off right there, put them in this basket, and go take a bath."

"Y, yes ma'am!"

The children, shrinking away from her, take off their clothes in front of the door. Ramis and Shui also take off their clothes... hey, hey, hey! Even if there's no one around to see, this is still outdoors. It's improper for young ladies. That's the warning I wanted to give, but it seems that I was jumping to conclusions, and they only took off their shoes and socks.

Then, let me provide some bath towels.

"Thanks Hakkon. Shui, you too."

"Hakkon is considerate, ne-. If you were a human, you'd be super popular-ssu!"

"He's popular now as is!"



As if to hid my embarrassment from the two who are praising me, I form change into the <Fully Automatic All-in-One Coin Washer and Dryer>. I'm happy they're praising me, but when you're hit with forward, honest sentiments, it gives you a weird, itchy feeling.

"A, this is the one that does laundry. Then I'm going to bring you inside."

Ramis hugs and picks me up and puts me in a corner of the entryway. And then she put in the dirty clothes and underwear that were taken off and started the laundry.

"What on earth..."

"Hakkon's a mysterious magic tool that can take on all kinds of different shapes -ssu. Amazing, right?"

Shui sticks out her chest and boasts like it's about herself, and next to her, Ramis is nodding in an exaggerated manner.

"Oh my, although I don't really understand, it's amazing. The magic tools these days are convenient."

It's like the reaction of a tech-illiterate mother in front of the latest electronic product. Can't make heads or tails of it, but she understands it's supposed to be amazing. -tte, it's not me who's amazing, it's just that Japan's technological ability is excellent.

"The laundry will be done soon -ssu, so everyone get in the bath before then. Come on, if you don't hurry up, I'll catch and lick you-ssu!"

"Waaa-!"

With her tongue sticking out and wiggling it up and down, Shui chased the kids around. The kids are screaming and running around, but they seem to be able to have fun anywhere.

If Shui was a man then this would totally be a crime. No, even if it's a girl, if the kids didn't want it, this would be OUT, huh?

"Since you're also washing their underwear, should I carry you closer to the bath, Hakkon?"

“Welcome.”

That’s true. The dryer will be done in another 10 minutes, so it will finish in the time they’re in the bath.

“A, but you’re heavy, so I wonder if the floor will cave in.”

“If so, then if you don’t mind circling to the back door, you can put him behind the bath. There’s a service door there as well.”

“Then, we’ll go around from outside, huh?”

As Ramis moved along the outer wall with me on her back, I could see the door. So that’s the service door.

Ramis placed me down with my back to the wall and softly opened the door. Within the door is the bath’s changing room, and the half-naked kids were crowding about.

But man, can this large crowd go in all together? If so, then it’s quite the large bathtub.

“Come on, don’t horse around. Then, everyone, let’s go to wash in the bath-ssu!”

The completely naked Shui held a small child’s hand and disappeared towards the bath. It’s the short-haired Shui who prefers appetite to eros, but she really is a woman, huh – I had that kind of weird appreciation.

“A-, there’s no hot water in the bath!”

“Oh my; and who was supposed to be on bath duty today, I wonder.”

The Principal, who had come to see what was going on in the dressing room, tapped her fingers on her cheek, tilting her head. Among the gazes exchanged, going who is it, who is it, two girls’ hands went up as they came forward.

“S, sorry. We were playing with Shui-neechn and forgot.”

The Principal reached her hand out to the heads of the girl, who was shrinking into herself. The girl was startled and raised her head, meeting the Principal’s eyes.

“It’s not good that you’ve forgotten your duties, but thank you for telling me honestly. Everyone makes mistakes. But rather than trying to hide it, it’s important to have admitted to them and reflected.”

These days there are lots of parents who yell without listening to the situation; it might be obvious, but isn’t scolding properly difficult? – I thought.

Even among my friends and relatives, there were people who yelled at their children until I pitied them, they were so mad they couldn’t stop themselves, and it wasn’t just once or twice. It’s better than parents who don’t get mad at all and just ignore them, but overdoing it is... –tte, I’m just a bachelor man who doesn’t know the first thing of child rearing, but aren’t I saying things like I’m all high and mighty?

“But this is troubling. It will take some time if we start filling the water and boiling it with firewood now. Should we give up on the bath for today?”

I’m a bit worried if they don’t have a bath after having their bodies chilled after playing with water. I wonder if I can do something. What is there in the Functions?

“A, the laundry’s done, right Hakkon? I’ll take it out.”

Looks like the dryer’s already done. During the time that Ramis took out the clean clothe, I looked over the Functions list.

There’s nothing to do with baths, na. Ummm, I can boil water, but it will take some time so the hot water... a, if it’s this, I can do it!

After checking to make sure all the laundry has been taken out of my body, I perform my third form change of today – to the <Onsen Vending Machine>.

Just like its name says, it’s an automated machine that sells onsens. In magnificent brush-strokes in Japanese, ‘Onsen Vending Machine’ is written on my rectangular body. On my side there’s a hose that comes out and it specifies that for 2 minutes’ time of onsen flowing out, it’s 100yen.

I’ve used the rarely seen vending onsen vending machine, but it cools down before you make it back home, so it’s a vigorously hot onsen.

“It’s another form I haven’t seen before, ne, Hakkon. Exactly how many bodies do you have, I wonder.”

I wonder. Even I haven’t counted them properly. Just the vending machines I’m currently able to change into are close to 20, I think.

“Umm, this long thing is, up until now all these long things had something come out of them. And in this situation... got it!”

Recently it’s mostly been Hyurumi who takes on the role to figure out how to use my function, but as expected, Ramis’ ability to understand is also great.

Hyurumi uses the situation and my shape to make a guess about my abilities, but in Ramis’ case I can’t help feeling that she reads my thoughts to understand. Although I think she can’t do the same with reading my character.

I can’t thank Ramis enough for seriously facing someone who’s just a vending machine.

Leaving the bathroom’s sliding door open, the hose was thrust into the bathtub. In this situation, looking back over at me and closing one eye in a wink is the signal, huh? Then, let’s release it all at once.

The onsen flowed forth with quite the force, and also thanks to Speed, the bathtub was filled in no time.

“Uwa-, amazing!”

“It’s a bath, a bath!”

“I’m going to jump in-“

“Hey, properly wash your body-ssu!”

The kids’ and Shui’s scolding voices echoed in the bathroom. My role to amass hot water was over, so I once again returned to the laundry and spun the leftover laundry around.

Ramis also stripped everything off and is going to wash up with everyone in the bathroom.

“Hakkon-san, was it? I thank you for this. You’ve helped us so much.”

I don’t know how she sees me, but the Principal bows her head deeply.

“Welcome.”

“Er, that means an affirmation, ne. Recently Shui has often been brooding over something so I’ve been worried, but seeing her today made me feel relieved. From now on as well, please take care of her.”

It’s splendid for her to thank and entrust someone to me, who is just a vending machine. Sorry, but just that would make me embarrassed.

But I wonder what Shui, who has such a warm place like this, would wish for. To maintain this orphanage it would take a lot of money, so is her goal money after all? U-n, this would be prying, and it’s rude.

Both the laundry and the bath is done, and I’m going to treat for dinner, so thinking things they haven’t eaten before would be good, I provided frozen set meals and cup ramen, but I was a little concerned about giving a balanced diet, so after the meal I also pulled out fruit and crepes.

As expected, I’m suspicious of the floor of the dining room and kitchen, so my place at the orphanage was determined to be to the side of the entrance.

I had thought that I’d take it easy by myself during the time the kids are eating, but the kids said, “Then Hakkon will be lonely by himself,” so they ended up putting out tables and chairs in the garden and taking their meal there.

There are mostly unoccupied houses in the area around the orphanage; even if they got rowdy there were rarely any complaints, so the children, with their mouths full of food, kept making merry, saying, “So tasty, so tasty!” in loud voices.

All of the children’s clothes are simple... no, I’m speaking too ambiguously. There isn’t even a single child with rough clothes and a round belly. That said, I also don’t see any child that’s too thin, so I think their diets are being managed somehow.

After that it’s providing underwear and towel-related things, huh?

I could also donate money, but I wonder if it’s okay for a vending machine like me to

give out charity. At these times, I don't know how far I can get involved, and for me, I don't understand the subtleties with this. If I had the ability to have a conversation normally, it would be possible to assist without them hurting the other's feelings, though.

I've thought about all sorts of things for earning myself points, but when looking at the poor yet happy children, I've come to think of myself as someone with very dirty existence.

"Your lights are flashing, but could you be thinking about something weird? Hakkon is Hakkon. Right now you're able to provide a meal free for everyone and make them smile because you have the surplus to be able to so, right? That's why it's fine to have more confidence in yourself."

Ramis, standing next to me before I knew it, said words that sounded like she had read my thoughts, smiling brightly.

She's amazing, Ramis is. She realizes and understands what a simple vending machine that can't speak is thinking.

That's right, yeah, I'm me. I don't have any intentions of stopping my point earnings, but I'll start thinking a little more about the situations in my surroundings from now on.

And for right now it's to simply enjoy this time, thinking only about how to make the kids happy.

- 
1. It sounds like Ramis is spraying it upwards, and the kids are running through it, not being hosed down and sent flying.

# Chapter 61

## Night at the Starting Level

The kids, who had eaten dinner until their stomachs were stretched out, are all stretched out on the floor. This is a cave where you can't see the sky, so the difference between night and morning seems like it would be hard to tell, but it seems like it's currently night.

It feels like my sense of night and day would get weird if I lived here.

It would be good to enter energy-saving mode if it's night, but there's no difference in the brightness in the surroundings, so I suppose there wouldn't be any problems if I stay as is.

Light leaks out of a window of the former-mansion turned orphanage, so that means Ramis and the Principle are still awake, huh?

"Hakkon, thanks for the work today-ssu. Everyone was super happy so I'm really grateful-ssu."

Shui sits down cross-legged next to me. Her body swayed left and right, expressing her happiness with her entire body.

If she's that obvious with her delight, even though I'm a vending machine, it's more than I deserve.

Her cheeks are slightly flushed because she was swigging the cocktails I provided at the dinner table, I suppose. She thought it was just juice, so she drank quite a bit.

"Today's costs weren't cheap at all -ssu. I'll definitely be this back, so I want you to wait a bit -ssu."

"Too bad."

"E-, you won't wait -ssu?"

No, that's not it. I want to say it's okay not to pay it back, but it's hard to convey the fine nuances.

And if I was going to demand money, then it would be from the food stand owners, so Shui, who received the champion's prize, has absolutely no reason to pay.

"Too bad. Thank you very much."

"Um, do you mean I don't have to pay it back –ssu?"

"Welcome."

I got it across somehow. As thanks that she understood me, I gave her a cola as a present.

I dropped her favorite 2-liter cola into my retrieval opening. Today's evening meal would have been a small for the big-eater girl, after all. She had even given the children her portion, so I think her stomach still has room.

"A, the fizzy stuff! My stomach's still empty, so this helps –ssu!"

She opened it, put the opening to her mouth, and heartily gulped it down. The carbonation is intense, so if you drink it all at once like that...

"Kuhaaa-, *buuuuuuuurp*."

A splendid burp echoed out into the night. As expected, she's embarrassed so she looked at the ground, face red.

It's probably better to say something at times like this to gloss over it. Right, I've decided.

"Congratulations, you have won another."

Her face went even redder. Looks like my choice was definitely wrong.

"O,oh yeah. Did you know that this Starting Level is a place where people diving into the Dungeon will definitely visit-ssu?"



Heeh, is that so? They were saying it's the first level, so I was thinking that it was the first level of the dungeon, though.

"Too bad."

"If you can't first enter this level and reach the transfer circle within, you aren't able to move to another level -ssu. Maa, ones who can't travel through the Starting Level don't have the right to continue on to other levels -ssu."

I see. I had heard that you were free to come and go between the levels with the transfer circle, but here alone is it not free to use, huh?

"But if you reach the inner transfer circle even once, then next time you can take off from any of them anywhere -ssu."

So you don't have to capture the first level every time you want to go to the surface, huh? So there's also that consideration, huh? I'm understanding less and less about how the Dungeon works.

"And so the community here is the not few people who have been unable to reach the transfer circle within and remained -ssu. And, there are also people here who made children and can't move around-ssu. And so, being born without knowing the outside world, the place where the children who are abandoned because they're in the way are gathered is... here-ssu."

The kids at this orphanage are kids who don't know the outside world? In fact, if they've never moved from this level, then they've grown up without ever experiencing the sky or weather or fresh air. U-n, this seems like it would have a negative impact on the kids' growth.

"My wish is that everyone in the orphanage would be happy -tte, it's a problem that my lips are strangely loose today-ssu. I want you to forget what I said just now-ssu. I'm going to bed already-ssu! Good night!"

Waving both arms wildly while walking with an unsteady gait, she disappeared through the door. Thanks to the effects of the alcohol, I heard all sorts of things.

Various people have various lifestyles, and there are a wide varieties of troubles. It's something that should be obvious, but recently I haven't been thinking of anything but

doing business as a vending machine and my points.

No, as a vending machine, I think that's the correct position to take, but these exceptions are difficult. If I make it all cheap and do free service work, then it'll be the owners of the food stalls that will be in trouble, and I won't earn points.

I must be aware of the difference between business and volunteer work.

"Oi, so it's here..."

"Yah, Bro. I heard there's a rare magic tool here."

The voices of men, whose tones sound exactly like ruffians, are coming from a distance. They will definitely show up here, according to the explanation that you can instantly understand their motives from.

Although it's a place with few people, I can't even say that this place has good public security even as a joke, so they seem to be indulging themselves.

It's been a while; are these customers aiming for me? Recently, I haven't come into contact with fellows like these, so I'm very curious about what actions they'll take. Before they see their opponent, let's turn off the lights and change into colors that melt into the darkness.

"It really makes as much free food as you want come out?"

"Yah, one of our grunts definitely said he saw it himself."

I'm concentrating on the shadowy forms of the people coming closer, but my opponents are four well-built men. They even prepared a wheelbarrow to put me on, huh?

My existence is rather well-known on the Seiryu Lake Level, but on this level I'm unknown, after all. So being aimed at is also obvious, huh?

There's a possibility that those men would be able to carry me off, but, let's see, what shall I do? If I make a loud sound and wake up Ramis and the others, then those guys will probably run away. But there's a possibility that the girls will be put in danger.

Should I see what I can do by myself here? Let's choose which ones of the Functions

I've already taken can be used.

Can I use this one and this one, and this one? I also have <Barrier> and my Durability is also raised up. If there isn't anything beyond the ordinary, I think I won't be kidnapped like before.

First I become the <Dry Ice Vending Machine> and scatter a large amount of dry ice at my feet. Next I become the <Pressure washer> and scatter water in my surroundings. When the water met the dry ice, a thin, white fog rose from the ground. And from there I became the <Jukebox>, and music, start.

"Oi, today it's really cold around our feet."

"There's, some sort of sound..."

"Weird music is..."

When I played music that's similar to horror films', the men looked around the area restlessly. This community's gloominess is fitting, so the atmosphere is perfect.

What should I do next? Lighting a flame with kerosene; as expected, that would be too much. Since it would be best if they just left, what would be best?

The opponents came as kidnappers – thieves, so they don't have lights. Even if they have eyes that are effective in the dark, there aren't many lights so they can't see me. If that's the case, then I feel like I'll manage if I scare them.

This time I've become the <Fully Automatic All-in-One Coin Washer and Dryer>, and with the door open, I fill the washer with water and spin it.

"Boss, can you hear water?"

"There's no river or pond 'round here; you're hearing things."

For you guys, I'll provide the washer's water shooting from the <Barrier>.

"Buwaa-, what the, what-!?"

"W,water-? W,where's this water from-"

“Ooooooooo it’s hitting”

They’re so flustered it’s funny. A, this has become a little fun. Next let’s do this.

I become the <Egg Vending Machine>, change into the appearance of a glass locker, and open all the doors, and barrage them with eggs from the <Barrier> all at once.

The eggs are packed with ten in a net together and I fired off over twenty of them simultaneously, so with that number, the men were caught up in it splendidly.

It’s a waste of food that you should be angry at, but it’s to settle this peacefully, so I hope you can look the other way.

“Ow-! What is this, it’s sticky and slimy.”

“B, boss, let’s go back! Someone’s targeting us!”

“Dammit, screw this! Guys, we’re going back!”

Looks like they’re withdrawing, so let’s send them off with “Light of the Fireflies.”<sup>1</sup>

With how they looked, they won’t be discouraged and they’ll come again. When they realize I’m not there, there’s also the possibility that they’ll break into the orphanage, huh? Let’s make a counter-plan tomorrow morning, with Ramis here.



The lights within the town are increased, so I think that the Starting Level is a little brighter. So this is this place’s mornings.

The dry ice and scattered eggs and eggshells have already been erased. With this, the orphanage’s kids won’t know what happened yesterday.

“Good morning, Hakkon.”

“Good morning-ssu”

The two who are energetic right from the morning appear. These two are quite similar

to each other in places, so in a single day they've hit it off and become quite close.

Ramis doesn't have many acquaintances among the Hunters, so I'm very relieved that she's made a friend of the same gender and nearly the same age. I'm somewhat uneasy about the Fools of Whimsy Brigade, but Shui herself is a nice woman, so I'm not particularly wary of her.

"The two of you are up early, ne. Good morning everyone."

So the person who showed her face behind them is the Principal. She greeted us with her usual gentle expression.

"Thank you very much."

I've been using "Welcome" as a substitute for good morning, but this way feels like a more proper greeting, so I tried changing it up.

-tto, that's right. The kids aren't around right now, so it's perfect timing. I need to tell them what happened last night.

"Are, there's a board where the products go. Is this the thing we saw the map from?"

You're correct, Ramis. It's one of the Functions I have, the <LCD Panel>. Using this, if I play the recording of yesterday's incident, it would arouse caution, I assume.

When I played the video from when the cheap thugs showed up to when they retreated, everyone watched it with great interest.

"So something like this happened last night-ssu? These guys, they've set up a hideout nearby; they're former Hunters-ssu."

"It seems so. They stopped being Hunters and ran towards committing crimes, what naughty children. And to even stretch their hands towards the orphanage's guests..."

It's someone the two of them know? I was thinking that we could hand this video in as proof to the guards and Hunters Association and catch the culprits, but those guys only made an attempt, you know. If it wasn't for me, then this would only be hearsay. Apprehending them might be a little impossible.

“Shui, I’m going out for a little while, so can I leave the children to you?”

“That’s fine, but... Principal, you can’t mean to”

*Are-?*

Shui’s face became tense and a sweatdrop went down her cheek. The Principal went into the orphanage and came back immediately, but in her hand was a large bow. On her back was a quiver of arrows.

“Well then, I’ll be back soon.”

So saying, she lowered her head to us and left. –tte, there wasn’t a chance to stop how smoothly things were going, but did the Principal just go to silence them by force?

E, that’s way too dangerous. A woman who looks to be sixty can’t be going by herself. I have to stop this now.

“A-, it’s been a while since I’ve seen the Principal so seriously angry-ssu. A, you two seem to be worried, but it’s okay-ssu. The Principal is my master for the bow, and originally an excellent Hunter. In the past she had the ability to lay waste to the Maze together with the Bear President, and now Principal is still superior-ssu. If she wasn’t, it would be impossible to run an orphanage in a place with such bad public order-ssu. And she’s also connected with people in places of power like the Bear President-ssu.”

I, is that so? I wouldn’t have guessed it from those thin arms and her atmosphere, but when I see that Shui isn’t at all flustered, it seems like she’s skilled to where being worried is stupid. Is this where I believe in her and wait?



An hour has passed since then, and the Principal returned when the kids had finished eating breakfast. She doesn’t look any different from when she set off – – no, if I look closely there are a few drops of blood on the cuffs of clothes, and there are a number of arrows missing from her quiver.

“Hakkon-san. Those people have complied to my persuasion, so those people will not meddle with you again.”

“Thank you very much.”

Rather than my reason, it was my instinct that made me give my immediate thanks. Even now she has a smile overflowing with kindness, but I think it can't be helped that I remember that completely different, intimidating smile from before.

And so the rabbits have claws, and the troubles with those guys have been solved, besides. In thanks, I'll leave a weeks worth of food and beverages.

I immediately made the judgment that this person was the type you don't want as an enemy. I wonder if Shui will also become like the Principal one day.

"N, I feel like someone's watching me -ssu."

Did she realize I was looking at her? Looking at Shui, who was pulling back like she feels uncomfortable, I let out a, "Too bad."

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## 1. Light of the Fireflies – a graduation song

# Chapter 62

## A New Level

I've safely returned to the Seiryu Lake Level and continued my usual business, but recently the demand has been decreasing.

That said, it's not like my income's disappeared. From the food and beverage stalls there's a huge demand for regularly wholesaling ingredients, and I also provide contraception for Sherry so I'm making enough profit.

The group of 4 who come early in the morning, the two gatekeepers, and the other regulars come through so I'm in the black, but the earnings are clearly decreasing. If my goal is the profits then there's also the option to move to a different level and do business there, but it's comfortable so settling down here isn't a bad idea either. In the first place, I can't move on my own, so if I were to migrate I'd have to leave it to Ramis.

"Hakkon! They said Leader Keryoil has a request. Let's go together, ne."

Ramis' voice called out to me while I was deep in thought like that.

So Leader's called for us, huh? It was something they talked about before we left for the investigation, but they most likely decided on the next place for an expedition, na. Let's accumulate a large amount of points for fighting against a Level Ruler. To activate and maintain <Barrier>. That's the duty I've been assigned with, after all.



"Oh, you properly came, na. Maa, sit down."

Ramis, Hyurumi, and I, who were invited to the Fools of Whimsy Brigade's tent, sit down on the ground in front of Leader.

Guess we haven't been inside since the previous time when Shui wanted to show off. Within the large tent are a number of wooden boxes reinforced with iron frames lying



around; some of the brigade members have opened those boxes and are rummaging in them. It looks to be the brigade members' personal affects within them.

"About what we talked about previously, we've decided on the next Level Ruler to defeat. We're looking to defeat the Lamentations of the Dead Level's Ghost King. And so we want Hakkon and you guys to participate."

It's a level with a dangerous-sounding name. No matter how I think about it, it's a place that should have a wealth of undead-types. And as a bonus prize, there's a Ghost King. The image I have is a magic-using skeleton with an expensive-looking robe wrapped around its body, but I wonder what it's actually like.

"Lamentations of the Dead, huh. If I remember right, it be a place with heaps o' nasty things like undead-demons and bonepeople-demons. -tte, right... Ramis."

Like she just thought of something, Hyurumi peered into the face of Ramis, who was staring at the ground without saying a word. Following her lead, I also looked at Ramis but... isn't she trembling constantly?

"We're really, going to, go there?"

Wonder why she's talking with weird pauses.

"Yeah, that's what we're hoping for. Is that inconvenient for you, Ramis?"

"E, uun, it's not like that, but, I mean, it's not like that, but are you wanting to spend nights there?"<sup>1</sup>

It's rare that she's so timid. Her voice is so soft; can it be that Ramis isn't good with horror stuff? She's clearly terrified.

"You was always bad with scary stories since way back, na. You're scared, I bet."

"I,I'm not! Mou, I'm not a kid, so I'm fine!"

No matter how you look at her, she's just acting tough. I see, so she hates it, huh? It depends on how horror-like that level is, but for people like this who can't deal with it all, it's truly impossible, na.

In the past I had a friend who loved horror stuff, and I had many bitter experiences, like being shown countless films of that type and being made to go all over the place for haunted houses, so I've built up some tolerance. I'll probably be okay.

"A-, is it impossible if you're scared? The mobs there are moving dead bodies and skeletons, and then ghosts and the like. It'll be fine, it'll be fine. They're way weaker than gluttonous-pig-demons."

"Leader. It's normal to be scared of those. Not everyone's nerves have died off like Leader's."

When Vice-Leader Felmina scolded him, Leader Keryoil shrugged his shoulders.

"I only know 'bout it from what I've heard, but what kinda place is the Lamentations of the Dead Level?" (Hyurumi?)

"Let's see. Regardless of night or day, the sky is covered with heavy clouds, lightning flashes, it's chilly, and there are decaying tombstones scattered about within; it's like that, I suppose."

Hearing Felmina-san's explanation, Ramis, who has completely shrunk into herself, clung to me with a hug. Her shivering is clearly conveyed through the parts that are touching me. Looks like she's seriously frightened.

With the circumstances like this, it looks like Ramis might not be able to participate in the Lamentations of the Dead Level.

"Ramis, are you seriously freaked?" (Hyurumi)

"N,n,no I'm, not. Being scared of ghosts, I'm not a kid."

"Don't push yourself. When you was a brat, just hearing about scary things made ya unable to go to the bathroom at night, ain't that right?"

"Hyurumi! That's so long ago, you don't have to talk about it, right!?"

She's panicking in an obvious way. If she's like this, it looks like it will be difficult for her to accompany us, let alone be counted among our fighting strength.

“This is a problem, na. If it’s impossible for Ramis, it’ll turn into a question of who’s going to carry Hakkon. Our lineup doesn’t have that kind of superstrength.” (Keryoil)

“That’s true. There isn’t anyone capable of carrying Hakkon-san easily. That said, if Hakkon-san does not become our partner, it will be impossible to go on a long expedition due to the trouble with provisions.” (Felmina)

“Because the Ghost King doesn’t stay in a fixed area, it’ll be a tough time looking for him. Being able to search with Hakkon fixed on someone’s back is indispensable.”

Leader and Vice-Leader folded their arms and groaned. Even if this is a world with monsters and demons wandering about, ghosts and horror-type species are a different sort of scariness. I fully understand the feelings of disliking it, but if I lose my means of getting around, then I’ll become just luggage.

“H,hang on. It looks like everyone’s decided I’m not going, but it will totally be fine. In fact, being scared is my specialty.”

You can totally see she’s forcing herself. Since her tone of voice is different from usual.

It’s true that there was never an instance where she said she didn’t want to go, but... it looks impossible-ish for Ramis.

“Kay then, let’s try goin’ to the Lamentations of the Dead Level once. Leader, there’s a community there, right?” (Hyurumi)

“Ou, there is. It ain’t to the degree of the one here, but it’s splendid enough. It’s a level that’s quite popular with a group of guys with particular hobbies. Normal people also go quite often. Naa, Vice-Leader.” (Keryoil)

“Well, the majority go to see the scary things, though. It seems that there’s a demand for that type of thing in this world. It’s a level where ghosts and bizarre phenomenon is your everyday, after all.” (Felmina)

So they’re treating it like a famous haunted site. If it’s like that, the people who like that stuff won’t be able to hold themselves back, na. I can imagine rich people seeking pleasures and carefree young masters going.

“Shall we take Hyurumi up on that suggestion? First let’s spend some time at the

community to get used to the atmosphere. If it's impossible no matter what, we'll think of some other way then." (Keryoil)

There weren't any objections from anyone, so we're going to move to the Lamentations of the Dead Level to give it a try. I'm concerned that the blood has drained from Ramis' face, but if we don't confirm exactly how bad she is with this stuff beforehand, our lives could be endangered.



Moving to the Lamentations of the Dead Level through the transfer circle, it was a place beyond expectations.

Gloomier than the Starting Level, in the far distance you can see frequent flashes of lightning as the thunder roared. The buildings erected in the community are suitably old, and for some reason they were mostly western-style buildings.<sup>2</sup>

There's no inconvenience to walking, since streetlights are installed all over. The inhabitants prefer black and navy, so both clothes and the cityscape are unified in understated colors.

All the inhabitants are clearly doing this on purpose, these guys. I can't see it as anything other than purposeful direction to instill a sense of fear.

There's also quite a number of Hunters; these guys are dressed in the usual Hunter equipment of armor and robes.

"Well, this is the type of atmosphere here. How is it, Ramis?" (Felmina)

"Hiu-. I,I'm fine. It's totally normal."

She's disturbed, naa. The way she's looking here and there and everywhere is completely like suspicious behavior. I get that you're scared, so calm down. The inhabitants here are looking at the shivering Ramis carrying a vending machine with suspicious eyes.

"For now, shall we go to the inn..."

Keryoil is wearing a bitter smile on his face. He seems to have given up because this

seems impossible. To be honest, I also think it's no good.

Our goal is to have her get used to this level, so today only Leader, Ramis, and Hyurumi came. We're only spending several days in the community, but I'm suspicious of what tomorrow will bring.

Since Ramis jumped at every noise, my field of vision shook violently. I wonder if the carbonated beverages within are going to be alright.

We arrived at the end we'd be relying on for the next few days, but here too is an inn with some character.

Regarding the building, the exterior is old and it's quite splendid, but why is there ivy crawling on the wall? The light leaking out of the lantern installed in front of the main door is also a moderate amount of light, adding to the atmosphere.

It's a two-story building, but what exactly is the meaning of having only the window on the end of the second floor boarded up? A, I feel like there was a woman who was peering between the gaps of the boards, but... surely I'm seeing things. Un.

It's an inn where a ghost appearing wouldn't feel out of place. The appearance is one that would get full marks for a horror game.

"Co-,co-,co-,could this be where we're staying-?"

She's shaking so much she almost sounds like she's clucking.<sup>3</sup> When she's this scared, I want to send her home already, but the person herself still looks like she wants to tough it out, na.

"Yeah, That's it; if you can't deal with it anymore, tell us no matter what hour it is. We'll return to the Seiyru Lake level." (Keryoil)

"Wh,wh,what'cha sayin- 'bout? I'll awright -."

Aa, geez, it's unintelligible. Her dialect is also all messed up.

"Haaa. Leader, Imma stick with her so it be fine. If it gets seriously bad, I'll take her and go back immediately." (Hyurumi)

“O,ou. Please do. We’ll think about other ways to carry Hakkon then.”

I think that’s wise. It’s just that humans are creatures who can get used to things, so there’s still a miniscule possibility remaining that Ramis will be able to build some resistance in the short time we’re here.

I can’t have any expectations, but I’ll watch over her warmly.

When Leader Keryoil, leading the group, pushed on the main door with his hand, *creeeeee*, the door creaked open. So this part too is also horror-like.

Beyond the door was a hall, but just what is with the indoors being gloomier than the outdoors? In addition to that, I can feel the shopkeeper’s obsession with keeping the interior decor all in black.

There are also portraits, things I think are unnecessary for an inn, are lined up at a high location. The fact that I see their slight smiles as creepy is probably the fault of the atmosphere of this place.

It produces an eerie atmosphere, na. Ramis... I know you’re terrified, but if you hug me so tightly–.

《1 damage. Your Durability has been reduced by 1.》

Your fingers are sinking in, they’re sinking in!

A really bad creaking sound is being made, though-!

“Welcome... the Fools of Whimsy Brigade, is it? Thank you... for waiting.”

The one who appeared suddenly without a sound was a woman with long black hair. She’s wearing a black dress that looks like one a French doll would wear, suitable for mourning.

Her hair is long enough to reach the floor, and her bangs extend all the way to her mouth so you can’t discern her face, and her lips were red as if smeared with fresh blood. The corners of those lips are raised in a meaningful smile.

“Fuiiii...”

A, Ramis, who had passed her limits, fell backwards while standing.

- 
1. Tweaked a little bit because it was getting awkward. Ramis is asking if they intend on “stopping there” for a while, aka spending a decently long amount of time that would require spending the night there. Basically, she’s more worried about the long duration than she is about the night, but either way... I think the intent of the sentence remained the same.
  2. Think older western residential houses, not modern buildings. The kind of houses that are often haunted houses. I decided not to try to be specific, since it’s not like they’re clearly mentioning Victorian mansions, but basically, think Victorian mansions.
  3. This was tough. I did my best.  
<“Ko-,ko-,ko-,ko,koko de netomari surundesuka-?”  
(Th-,th-,th-,this is where we’re staying-?)  
She was shaking so much she sounded like a chicken.>  
kokoko is the sound a chicken makes.

# Chapter 63

## Against Ghosts

For Ramis to fall means, naturally, that I have also fallen on the floor with her, so right now the fainted Ramis is lying on top of me.

“Oi oi, I give up. For her to be this bad with it.” (Keryoil)

“Even like this, she bore with it well compared to when she was a brat. We’ll carry Ramis to her room; what to do with Hakkon?” (Hyurumi)

Undoing the leather straps to Ramis’ cargo carrier, Leader Keryoil carried her over his shoulder. If I remain like this I’ll hinder the inn’s business, so I temporarily become the <Cardboard Vending Machine>.

“Like this anyone can carry him, na. Inn keeper, do ya mind if we put Hakkon in front of the inn?”

“Of course... this gentleman is the rumored... magic tool with a will, isn’t it?... Fufufu, how mysterious.”

So this person is the inn’s inn keeper. She looks like it would suit her if she told fortunes on the side.

Hyurumi lifted me up in both arms and easily put me outside the inn. My current fixed position has become next to the door. Maa, that’s the most standard of standard places for a vending machine, so there are no problems.

“Seriously, she’s terrified, na. Always been like that. When there’s a scary story, she’d block both ears an’ scream, ‘A-,a-“. How nostalgic.” (Hyurumi)

The corners of the eyes of the reminiscing Hyurumi lowered, and she smiled with a gentle expression. Whatever you say, these two get along pretty well. When I see them talking together, there are times when I can’t see them as anything but close sisters.



“If she was actin’ like she usually does, she woulda run away a long time ago, but looks like she won’t give in this time.” (Hyurumi)

If you’re that terrified, normally you’d cry and run away, na.

Perhaps she was doing her best because there’d be troubled people if there wasn’t someone who could carry me? If that’s so, I don’t want her to push herself to do the impossible, though.

“Hakkon. You’re thinkin’ about the wrong type of thing, aren’t ya? As for why Ramis stubbornly tries ta overcome her fear... -tte, it’s pointless if I tell you, na.”

“Congratulations, you have won another.”

I wonder what intent that statement had. It was a declaration that held deep meaning, so Hyurumi only looked at me from the corner of her eye and didn’t say anything more.

It’s something I should think of for myself, na. The reason she’s stubbornly trying to overcome it, huh? Like, for a girl who wishes to become stronger for revenge, there’s no point if she can’t overcome this degree of fear?

“Maa, ya seem to be thinking about it carefully. Well then, leave looking after Ramis to me.”

So in the end she’s not going to tell me the answer. I want to lob questions at the leaving Hyurumi’s back, but I’m not bestowed with such words.

It’s unresolved, but I have the time so let’s leisurely think about it.

“O, what is this? Something weird with stuff lined up behind glass, huh? What is this?”

O-tto, it’s the first customer on the Lamentations of the Dead Level, huh? It’s a Hunter-like young man wearing metal armor. He brought his face close, like he was going to stick it to the glass, and peered in at the products.

Now then, let’s start the usual business.

“Welcome.”

“Uwo-, who is it!? Is it you?”

“Naw, man. It sounded like the sound came from this box.”

When one of his companions pointed it out, this time all three of them stared at me.

“Please insert the coins.”

“Ooo-, this box is seriously talking. What does it mean, insert the coins?”

The three are just making a fuss, not knowing where to insert the coins, and just flusterdly making a commotion. Like I thought, just these words won’t make it clear, normally.

I’d normally have a signboard placed next to me, with a simple explanation of how to use me stuck on it, so even a newbie would be able to handle it, but today I have to deal with it from ground zero.

Before now I couldn’t do anything but repeat my words, but even I can come to understand my own body and functions. When I searched around for various methods, I was able to come up with a number of methods. That’s right, I’m a progressive vending machine.

First I covered the glass covering for the products and set up the <LCD Panel>. And then, I played a video there.

“Oo-, within the box is a woman. Nee-chan, do you know how to buy things here?”

The young man called out to the woman shown on the panel, but there’s no way a video recording would reply, and the displayed woman – Ramis ignored them and stretched out her hand grasping a coin.

And then, while she was lost, saying, “What should I get-,” with her forefinger held up, she moved and pressed her finger towards the viewer. After that, she bent over, and when she stood up she was holding corn soup in her hand. She twisted the lid open and drank it down like it was delicious.

This was were the recording ended, but I continued to repeat it.

“What does this mean? Why is the woman repeating the same thing over and over?”

“This is, ain’t it an illusion? The woman shown is too small, right? And her movements are all exactly the same.”

The three men grouped together and continued their discussion with this and that for a while, then reached a decision.

“So basically, this woman is showing us how to use this magic tool. Right?”

“Welcome.”

It took some time, but they somehow arrived at the correct answer. This time they watched the video carefully, then one person who memorized how to use it came to buy a product.

“Alright, I’m buying it!”

“O-, so that’s how you do it.”

“I see.”

Before I knew it, people had gathered in the surroundings, admiring the Hunters who had safely bought a product. They seemed to be people who were interested but didn’t know anything about me, so they were observing.

“So you twist here to open it, na. And let’s try and drink it... *ka-*, delicious! It’s chilled ice-cold. It’s going throughout my body.”

His reaction became an advertisement more than anything, and kicked off the sales of one product after another. It’s unusual, and there are a lot of people who think it’s interesting and will buy tastes that can’t be experienced in this other world after all. It’s a favorable start, na. Let’s make some earnings for a while, until Ramis says she wants to return.



I understood to some degree while selling products, but hot products really sell well on this level. As for the inhabitants’ clothes, a lot of people are wearing thick clothing, so no matter how you think about it, it seems to be cold even if it’s not winter.

The Seiryu Lake Level had a temperature close to early summer, but the climate here is the exact opposite. The customers’ breaths aren’t white, so it’s probably somewhere

around 10 degrees C.

While I was thinking that, the customer traffic subsided, and the shadows of people on the streets also lessened. The gloomy surroundings have become completely black; apparently evening has fallen.

Even if it was gloomy during the day, there's a wide difference in the brightness between evening and daytime. There are also streetlights within the community, but it's like the darkness is eroding the light; I can't even say that those little bits of light make a difference even if I was being polite.

I've experienced countless nights after I became a vending machine, but this dark night gives me an unpleasant feeling. It's like an unnatural darkness. There's light from the surrounding buildings' windows, but it's only bright there, without illuminating the surroundings at all.

A black world only dotted with small pockets of light; other than that it's a consistent darkness. If it's this dark, of course no one wants to walk around, huh? With no background noise as well, it feels like you won't be able to tell the difference between reality and imagination; it's a fantastic sight.

Seems like this is why they call it the Lamentations of the Dead. This darkness most likely has some special characteristic. Even if you're going to subjugate monsters, you'd move during the day, avoiding the night.

I went into energy-saving mode, since there isn't a single person around and I can't do business, from the opposite direction, some sort of dim light came over.

I guess it's someone carrying a light in their hand. That light gradually gets bigger as it gets closer, but I'm getting a bad feeling from that light.

The person the light should have been illuminating isn't there. That light is floating by itself. While swaying back and forth, if there's a person, the height should remain the same as it draws closer.

I can't help but have a bad feeling. If I had feet I'd immediately run away and hide in the inn, but unfortunately I'm a vending machine and have no way of escaping.

I thought my spirit became strong when I got this body, but looks like that was my

misunderstanding. An odd sound reverberates from the parts within my body. So I, who became a vending, seems to be a bit shaken...

Stuck somewhere between fear and curiosity, I steeled my eyes and observed carefully. It's a skeleton clad in flames. -tte, that's a flaming-rook-head-demon, ain't it!? What the, I was scared for nothing. Normally it would be a scene of horror, but after knowing its weakness and defeating them many times, there's no need to be afraid after all this time.

After knowing their true identities, I have the presence of mind to spare. My fear has disappeared, but the problem is that monsters are appearing within the community, na. When it became night, monsters wander about the community like they own the place, so people can't carelessly go out at night, huh?

In the span of time I was thinking of that, other skulls wrapped in flames appeared. There are eight just within the range I can see. For some reason they're wandering without going inside the buildings, so I can't understand their objectives at all.

Huh-, this time it's a flaming-rook-head-demon appearing together with a skeleton. This guy's just a skeleton with a head, na. Ah, no, for it to be moving isn't normal, huh? O- a half-transparent human came out... it's become an outdoor haunted house.

If it's just these, no matter how grand the number there is, I won't be afraid, na. Rather than that, the horror-factor is rather light. The ghost-like half-transparent people are also wearing normal clothes, just walking around; if they're to scare people, I'd like more of a gimmick. If their lower halves were torn off, dragging their innards around, groaning with a bitter voice and running; I'd like them to imitate parts of Japanese ghosts.

Even though I'm leisurely observing, no matter which monster, none of them are going into the buildings. Could the inhabitants of this community be taking some kind of measures against them?

I activated <Barrier> just in case, but the monsters aren't coming over. Seems like they don't have any interest in me.

From now on we'll be exploring this level, so it won't be such a bad idea to try all sorts of things, na. Do I have any anti-undead products?  
N-, the typical thing would be salt?

Salt, huh... seems like there'd be some, but surprisingly that's one of the products not put in a vending machine. If it's rock salt I did buy some, so why don't I try it once?

The rock salt, in a clear, cylindrical case, fell into the retrieval slot; erasing just the case, I try launching the rock salt out of the <Barrier>. I was aiming at a skeleton, but my aim was went off, hitting a ghost dead-center – and passing through. Is it just the ghosts that won't receive physical attacks?

The monsters just glanced at the rock salt rolling around on the ground, not showing any particular reaction. So that means there's absolutely no effect.

Other things that seem like they'd have an effect are... a, I wonder what those would do. At the <Buddha Vending Machine> in a famous city in Kyoto that's a studio park, I had purchased Buddha statues and prayer beads.

It's in the top ten of the novelty products I know of. You might not believe it, but they really are selling those. It's quite small, enough to fit in your hand, but they're proper Buddha statues.

If the opponent is a ghost, it might have some effect. I ejected two of those Buddha statues and a set of prayer beads that I had purchased back then out of the <Barrier> and carefully watch over it.

The monsters were interested in the mysterious objects and came near, but they don't seem to have any effect. No, it could be because there weren't enough. I'll try as many as I'm able.



“Yo-, Hakkon. Did ya sleep last night... Uwooo-, what is all this!? Why are there weird-shaped dolls and stones rollin' on the ground?”

It's already morning, huh? Yesterday I was trying out the effects of rock salt and Buddha statues with the monsters as opponents, but I guess I pulled an all-nighter until the morning.

I thought it was a good idea, but this other world's denomination is different, huh-?

# Chapter 64

## Special Training

We're greeting the second morning since we've come to the Lamentations of the Dead Level.

It's gloomy as usual, but after experiencing that night, even this degree of light gives a sense of relief.

Leader Keryoil seems to have used the transfer circle to move to other levels. He had said that he was bringing the other participating members to this level. And also to search for whether or not there's any person that seems capable of carrying me.

We won't hope for someone like Ramis, but it would be fine if they had the power to transport me riding on a cart.

"Hakkon-sama... did you enjoy yourself last night?"

While I was pondering what we should do from now on, the Innkeeper sidled up next to me... since when were you here? I completely, absolutely didn't realize one bit.

Even though she's smack dab in my field of vision, she has no presence. It's like, if you said this person was a ghost, I'd believe it.

"In this place... when it becomes night... monsters appear even within the community, so... other than those who have confidence in their abilities... you are prohibited from going outside, see..."

The mystery from yesterday has been solved, but I wish you would have told me before.

"The monsters in this place... envy the living... so they are harmless to Hakkon-sama... so I thought they wouldn't attack you..."

So that's why they didn't come over to me at all and just peeked into the buildings?

“Rather than me... Hakkon-sama is... closer to them... no... do excuse me...”

I'd like you to stop saying meaningful things while leaving, though. Saying that stuff with that appearance will make me want to believe you unconditionally.

But man, what exactly did she want to say? That I'm something more like a ghost-type than a human, I guess. If that's so, she's not wrong. I'm something like a soul possessing a vending machine.

But I don't know how to feel about being called more ghost-like than the Innkeeper.

“Hakkon, sorry. About yesterday.”

The one who appeared, passing by the Innkeeper, was Ramis, in low spirits.

With a downcast face she stood next to me and leaned her back onto me. Her body doesn't seem to be trembling, but I can't say she's like her usual self even as lip service.

“Welcome.”

“Since I was a kid I didn't like scary things, but even though I thought I got a little better, it was completely no good. Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.”

She's so depressed it's like her soul is going to leak out. For me, it's the first time I've seen someone faint from fear, but for the person concerned it's a serious matter, na.

“Even though I said I'd be together with Hakkon forever, if I'm like this it's totally impossible, ne.”

“Too bad.”

“Seriously, it's too bad...”

Not good. In her 'negative mode', she's taking my words as they are. How should I cheer her up?

“F'crying out loud, this ain't like you. It's Ramis to act before you think. If you're scared, ya just gotta get over it. Right?”

So Hyurumi also came over. Unable to watch the depressed Ramis, she made a



proposal with her arms crossed.

That's right, as long you think you want it, then you'll manage somehow. It's simple, but there isn't anything easier to understand than this.

"Th,that's right! Un, if I'm not good with it, then I just need to get used to it!"

"Ya said it. Then I'm gonna give ya special training for getting over your fears."

"Special training... un, I can't be bad with it like this, ne. Roger, please teach me, Instructor!"

Hyurumi, seeing Ramis putting out motivated aura with her fist up in the air, smiled in satisfaction. I want to think that it's just my imagination that she's kind of looking at Ramis a little like she thinks it's going to be fun.

"Then let's first go get started by explorin' the community."

"Walking... around-?"

Why are you making a serious face and swallowing hard? There should have been nothing said that was difficult.

Taking a deep breath and checking 360 degrees around her, Ramis snapped to a saluting pose with her hand hitting her forehead.

"I can't do it!"

"It be too soon to quit. Ya know, the sky's just cloudy. Around here it's just a little gloomy. It ain't scary, right? Seiryu Lake had days like this, right?"

"Yeah, but the atmosphere here is different. If the Seiryu Lake Community is a frogman-demon, then here is a king-frogman-demon."

It's a metaphor I kind of understand, yet I kind of can't understand.

But, well, yeah, it's not just dark here; the air is heavy and the humidity is tough. There's condensation on my body after all.

“N, then, are you giving up? Hurry up and go back to Seiryu Lake; Hakkon and us are gonna explore together, so ya gonna have to wait a while.”

“I don’t want that!”

“Then ya gonna have to work hard, na. An’ so, right smack dab in front of us is a general goods store, so first let’s go there and by recovery potions.”

“U,un. Then, let’s go, Hakkon.”

So saying, Ramis squatted down to put me on her back as usual, but what was placed on her back was Hyurumi’s hand.

“By yourself. Go by yourself.”

“Y, you’re kidding...”

“Nope. If ya can’t even do this, ya won’t be able to go outside of the community together.”

“I, I can do it. L, leave it to me. I’m not a kid anymore, piece of cake.”

Like always, you can tell from Ramis’ tone that she’s trembling. Here is the main street so there’s a decent amount of foot traffic, so even if she’s scared she should be fine.

“U,un. If it’s me, I can do it. Here I go, leave it ta’ me.”

Is she going to be fine?... She’s clenching her fists and muttering to herself, though.

Having made up her mind, Ramis stood up heroically, stared fixedly straight ahead, and proceeded forward with a dignified gait – about ten steps.

There, she glanced backwards over to here. When Hyurumi, while smiling widely, waved her hand, she gave a tense smile and gave her hand a small wave, once again beginning to walk.

Watching her proceed with timid steps, I suddenly thought of it. When parents send their children off on their first errand, is this the kind of mental state they’re having?

She proceeded another few steps, but when people passed her, she rocked backwards in exaggerated surprise. Even so, her feet don't stop walking. You can do it, Ramis.

A-, the door of a residence close by opened with a large sound. She jumped close to 2 meters upwards on the spot, spun around and looked back towards us, and came running back at full power.

"Hakooooooooon! I caaaaaaan't!"

AaAa, isn't she about to cry? Even though it took her several minutes to go forward, the time it took coming back was around five seconds. She flew and clung to me while trembling violently.

There there, it was scary, na? Here, it's fine to drink this hot corn soup, so calm down. Would a sweet juice be better? Then I'll drop both and you can drink whichever you prefer.

"Ramis... Hakkon too, don't baby her..."

With her hand to her forehead, Hyurumi heaved a huge sigh. My bad, I am aware I was babying her.

But you know, if she's this terrified, then it would be better for her to withdraw without pushing it. If she wants to get stronger as a Hunter, she'll have to overcome it some day, but right now it can't be helped that she has to do it gradually.

"Givin' up and going back already?"<sup>1</sup>

"I think if I'm carrying Hakkon I can make it. Un, definitely, I'll make it! L,look, my job is to carry Hakkon, so it's no good if I'm not carrying Hakkon, I think!"

Ramis is frantic. I'm happy she wants me, but it's going to be completely as a guardian.

"Then, it's fine while carryin' Hakkon, so get going."

"Un. If I'm with Hakkon, it will be fine. Ne, Hakkon?"

It would be nice if that was true, though. But, well, it's completely different when you enter a haunted house alone compared to when you enter it while carrying a vending

machine on your back, so... I've never seen anyone enter a haunted house carrying vending machine, na.

"Hakkon, are you still there!? You're still there on my back!?"

"Welcome."

"R, really!? You're really there, right!?"

"Welcome."

"You can't leave my back, okay!? Definitely can't, okay!?"

"Wel – – come."

<ira – shaimase, where 'ira' means irritation>

I'm reminded of when I helped a kid in the neighborhood learn to ride a bike.

Even though there's no way that I, who can't move on my own, could leave her, for her to be uneasy and ask if I'm still there and all, even though this kind of load is riding on her back, is she unable to sense my weight? If she has this much power, then she'd be able to crush the monsters I saw at night in one blow.

"I'll try hard. I'll try really hard. So, together, we'll go exploring, ne."

She's trembling and even grinding her teeth, putting one firm step in front of the other.

I see; even though I'm dimwitted, I've finally understood. So Ramis is being this frantic to overcome her fear because she wants to be together with me, huh?

If that's the case, then I will also cheer her on with all my might as she overcomes that fear. There's still quite some distance to the general store. Is there any function that can help me make her even a little less scared to arrive at her destination?

The effect that makes her feelings at ease... relaxation... if it's that, it would be scent, huh? I heard that the scent of roses or the sent of grapefruits is good. I had a friend who was big into aromatherapy. And then the scent of coffee is also supposed to be calming.

With that, should I transform into the flower vending machine and the fruit vending machine? No, wait. When I turn into those vending machines, only a tiny part of the smell will leak out. On that would immediately have a distinctive, strong smell being produced would be – – let's take this.

I choose <Scent Diffuser> from the functions list. This isn't the type used to cover up a toilet's stink, but a <Scent Diffuser> for promotional use.

It's an item that is easily incorporated into a vending machine and there are over a hundred different kinds of scents; when the proximity sensor detects a person, it's a mechanism that shoots out the scent from a scent cartridge. To make this function worth it, I also acquired <Proximity Sensor>.

It's installed so that it emits a products fragrance in order to draw someone in, but the scent is quite strong so, although Ramis is carrying me on her back, it should reach her.

The scents of grapefruit and coffee are also among the hundred scents. Shall I try releasing a scent I think will be effective?

"A-, there's a really good smell. Is it citrus?"

O-, the trembling I could detect through Ramis' back has disappeared. I don't know if this is the relaxing effect or if it's simply just a distraction, but as long as her terror has lessened, it doesn't matter.

Just like this, for Ramis' sake, let's try a lot of things out.

As a result of trying a number of things, what overrides her terror is scents from the <Scent Diffuser> and music from the <Jukebox>. The most effective was when I let her listen to jazz while wafting the scent of coffee out, so, since I have a time limit of 2 hours for form change, I think the most effective plan is to go with <Scent Diffuser> as my main, with music as an addition in an emergency.

Maa, Ramis calmed down with the musical performance, but the odd looks from our surroundings aren't at all subtle, so I hope that she doesn't realize THAT.

- 
1. It was probably unnecessary, but when I typed out the lit "Going back already?" my knee-jerk reaction was, "Back where?", so I added the giving up part that's already more/less implied. Purely because I'm THAT type of smartass.

# Chapter 65

## Members

Ramis, who performed the rigorous special training everyday, although for only a few hours, was adapting to the environment.

The contents of the special training were; to go on errands within the community with me on her back. To go to the toilet within the inn by herself at night. Walk around the community with me on her back.

The excruciatingly painful contents seemed to break her heart time and time again, but she overcame it with a persistent spirit and became able to freely move about the community as long as I was on her back – am I too sweet on her?

Maa, in exchange the urban legends of the community came to include one of a girl wandering around while carrying pleasant-smelling steel box, but that's insignificant.

"Hyurumi, I'm now perfectly alright! I'm not afraid anymore."

Even now she's startled when people suddenly come out of the side streets, to the degree where she'll jump, but yeah, compared to before, she's steadily made progress.

"I see, I see. I also saw Ramis doin' her best, yeah? Then, let's move on ta the next step?"

"Whatever it is, come at me!"

She strikes her chest full of confidence. Seems like she's gained quite a bit of confidence with these few days of special training.

"Oo, you said it well. Well then, next is goin' out into the community without Hakkon and – -"

"Impossible, please spare me."

Faster than she finished speaking, she nimbly bent her waist and took a position of

lowering her head at a 90 degree angle. It's pretty immaculate. She didn't even hesitate a bit. Looks like walking around alone is still too high of a hurdle.

"I think it'll be fine 'cause you'll be together with Hakkon even while explorin, but it's that, yeah? The problem is whether you'll be fine goin' outside the community."

"I,I'll be fine. Look, there's also going to be other people. I won't be alone.

"Maa, that's true. Oh yeah, Leader said he's expectin' to bring the members for the exploration today."

O-, the search for the Ghost King is finally going to happen. I wonder what kind of other people will be participating alongside the usual Fools of Whimsy Brigade members. There are a lot of undead-types, so will the people coming be something like a monk or priest?

From what I know, people who have the Divine Protection of the type that can cures wounds are responsible for the job of healing in this world. It's said that the old woman among my four early morning regulars has this Divine Protection

Magic that heals wounds also exists, so for me, I'm hoping for a nun-like woman and a man like a battle priest<sup>1</sup>

"-tto, this is where you guys are. Today I brought the lineup who are going on the exploration

This voice is, Leader Keryoil? Looks like he found us while we were wondering throughout the community for the sake of the special training.

The two girls turned around, and I also directed my line of sight towards Leader.

Behind Leader is the winner of the eating contest, the boy-cut wearing vacuum-girl Shui, and the four from the Big Eaters Brigade. The Red-White twins are there. So far it's the usual members, but looks like there is another participant.

"It's been awhile, Hakkon-san. Ramis-san and Hyurumi-san as well."

Jet black armor and a refreshing smile. So Mishael is also a companion. Although there's nothing wrong with him when it comes to battle power... with just this large amount of people, will his communication disorder be okay?

“You guys already know Mishael, right? We’re trying him out in the Fools of Whimsy Brigade this time. If it goes well and the Lone Black Flash becomes our comrade, we’ll welcome him with both hands up. Seems like he’ll be checking our brigade during this time’s expedition. Naa, Mishael.”

“No no, I’m just making sure of things like if I’ll hold you guys back, or if I can work cooperatively without being a hindrance.”

It sounds like he’s being humble, but I’m the only one who knows that the latter part of that is actually the most important point. Right now it looks like he’s conversing normally, but I bet he’s so stressed out he’s sweating inside that armor.

He seems to be the only addition, but are there no priest-like people in this world? It’s bit of a pity.

“Right, then let’s go into a restaurant somewhere and go over the contents of the expedition and rough rewards.”

Leader said, urging us like so, and all members flooded into an eatery nearby.

It’s a mid-sized shop with no other customers since it’s not a meal time, so it was bewildering to see a brigade come in suddenly.

“You see, you this many people. Could you make a reservation for later?”

Leader flicked a gold coin over to the waitress who came running up.”

Seeing that, her attitude did a complete flip from before, and when she showed us to a large round table within the shop, she placed some sort of signboard-like thing in front of the door in the entryway. There’s probably something like ‘Currently Reserved’ written on it.

Everyone took their seats, and I was also set down in place of a seat after removing one of the chairs.

“I’m going to order an appropriate amount of food and drinks. Aa, you guys, don’t look at me like that. I get it, I’ll ask for a lot of food.”

Upon seeing the watery eyes of Shui and the Big Eaters Brigade, Leader made a super-



sized order. With these five people present, your Engel's coefficient shoots up in an instant<sup>2</sup>. Although for the food stalls, they're delightful customers.

"Right then, I don't mind if you eat, but listen up. This time, all members here are going to search out the Ghost King, with the intentions to bury it. A-, this time Vice-Leader has extenuating circumstances, so she's doing other things."

"Because Vice-Leader's scared -ssu, ne." (Shui)

"That's definitely it; she's too embarrassed to show her scared side to Leader." (White)

"For real, White? It's way too unexpected for Vice-Leader to have such a cute side to her." (Red)

From the Brigade members's whispered conversation, I understood the reason for Vice-Leader's absence right away. In other words, she's exactly like Ramis? People with strong wills tend to be bad with ghost stories, na.

But without the calm and composed assistant, Vice-Leader Felmina, I've become concerned about the expedition. I wonder who will divide the roles and settle the accounts.

"By the way, the reason we asked for the Big Eaters Brigade's cooperation is because they won't get overwhelmed with this kind of atmosphere and they have excellent tracking abilities."

"I don't really get it, but humans aren't good with dark places and things like corpse demons, or bone-people demons, or ghost-demons, ne. That's not a feeling we understand." (Mikene)

"I hate the rotting meat smell of the corpse-demons, though. Because that stink makes me lose my appetite." (Pel)

Pel nodded his head deeply and wrinkled his face in response to Mikene's statement. Seems like beastmen differ for humans concerning the sense of fear towards horror elements. When I think about it, the Big Eaters Brigade are fitting.

As a bonus, they have good ears and noses. In an emergency, they're fast on their feet. You can say that these are considerably valuable abilities.

“This time, the search area is vast and the surroundings are dark. For us, we’re grateful that you can see in the dark.”

Certainly, Tasmanian devils are nocturnal, after all... un, they might just be the best people for the job.

“I brought Shui and Red-White along by force.”

“Tyrant! Even though I’m also scared-!” (Shui)

“Me too, even though, if I had to say one way or another, I’m bad with this stuff-!”  
(Red/White)

“Me too, me too!” (White/Red)

Leader Keryoil smiled widely at the Brigade members who were dropping complaint after complaint, and with, “You guys ain’t got the right to refuse,” he completely shut them down.

The Brigade members undauntedly jeered at him, and it became an unsightly quarrel. We’re used to this scene, so Ramis’ group didn’t stop, quietly lifting the food that was brought over to their mouths.

Mishael doesn’t understand the situation, but he doesn’t have the courage to insert himself into the conversation, so he’s petrified, forcibly keeping a smile plastered on his face.

After a while, both sides exhausted their vocabularies, so all the members of the Fools of Whimsy Brigade sat themselves down into their seat while breathing heavily, shoulders heaving.

“Right then, back on topic. The opponents on the Lamentations of the Dead Level are mostly corpse demons, bone-people demons, flame-rook-head demons, and ghost demons. For the explanations regarding these monster, Hyurumi, if you would?”

“Ou, leave it to me. We fought the crap out of the flame-rook-head demons on the Maze Level, so I’ll leave them out. Oh, Mishael, you need an explanation?”

“No, it’s alright. Please continue.”

“That so. Then, first is corpse demons. Like their name says, they are dead people movin’ around. There are ones with their rotten flesh sloughing off, an’ there are also ones like living people. Their main point is that their movements are sluggish but their power is strong. They group up, though rarely, and ya should avoid gettin’ bit.”

In other words, a zombie. In horror movies, typically it’s infectious spread through biting, but since there wasn’t anything about that in the explanation, I suppose I don’t need to worry about that.

“Bone-people demons are movin’ skeletal specimens, na. There’re researchers who say that they’re corpse-demons who have had all their flesh fall off to the extreme, but I have a different opinion... –oops, I don’ need ta say that. They’re trait is fast movin’ but weak; it’s that, ya’ won’t go wrong thinkin’ they’re the exact opposite o’ corpse demons.”

Bones seem like they’re very brittle, na. In certain moves, bone enemies are easily destroyed. The way Hyurumi talked about them also had no tension, like they’re small fry enemies.

“An’ so, last is the ghost demons, but they’re semi-transparent bodies won’t take direct attacks. So like, they’re pains in the asses, but their weakness is light. Ya can destroy them by bathin’ them in intense light. If your carryin’ light, they won’t get close ta you, either.”

Is that how it is? So they won’t target me, huh? It looks like it will be better to constantly be lit up at night.

“Maa, those’re just the monsters that appear frequently, but aside from them, there’s also strong unique individuals and other monsters who’ve been seen in small numbers. So ya gotta be careful.”

“Thanks for the explanation. I’m grateful that having Hyurumi here saves me the trouble of gathering information. We’re planning on leaving early tomorrow morning. Everyone make sure to make your own preparations. First we’ll spend about half a day searching then return to the community. We’ll repeat that for a while. So you won’t need that much luggage.”

So we're starting out with repeated day-trip searches? Thinking about Ramis' situation, I think that's best. It seems like the monsters get stronger at night, and it's best to gather information about our enemies during a day trip.

While thinking about such things, when I glance over to the side, Ramis, whose fingers are sinking into my body, is nodding over and over like a broken mechanical doll.

A, are things going to be alright, from now on?

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1. shinkan senshi – I'm guessing it's more of a fantasy rpg type of word. Literally "shinto priest warrior", but when I googled it I got western-styled priestesses in armor. Looks more dps focused than tanky, so I hesitated in calling it "paladin"... I guess it could be a cleric... anyway, if anyone knows the correct rpg class name, let me know. I'm just gonna go with battle priest for now.
2. Engel's coefficient – proportion of your income that's spent on food.

# Chapter 66

## Corpse Demon

The large family of 11-people, consisting of me, who is a vending machine, Ramis, Hyurumi, Leader Keryoil, Shui, the Red-White twins, the Big Eaters Brigade, and Mishael in total, went out on an expedition. There's also a boar-drawn, covered wagon with us.

I had left the community with optimistic feelings that Ramis won't be frightened with this many people around, but.

"This is an eerie place as always." (Leader)

"I just remembered I had to do something important, so let's go back, White." (Red)

"Oh yeah, let's, Red." (White)

"I forgot my luggage at the inn -ssu." (Shui)

Leader caught the members of the Fools of Whimsy Brigade who all turned around together at once and tried to go back. I assume half of it was joking around, but there was also a high degree of seriousness to it. There was a kind of feeling in the air that made me think so.

The place we've arrived at is a desolate place where weeds won't grow and tombstones stuck up out of the ground. And they're not in good condition but missing bits and pieces; as of now I haven't found one that retained its original shape.

There are dead trees without a single leaf here and there, but from the branches sways a straw rope tied in a loop.

How should I say this... it's got taste, na. The weathered armor that's like the remains of a Hunter scattered around also gives it a high score as a horror spot. Furthermore, the occasional roar of thunder and theatrical flashes of lightning are also points to appreciate.

Well, while I'm taking on these opinions like I'm some critic, I looked over at the expedition members, but the only ones who are composed are Leader, Hyurumi, and the Big Eaters Brigade.

"I wonder why they made the graveyard outside the community." (Mikene)

"Well, Mikene, it's that. What's it called." (Shote)

"Mikene and Shote don't get it at all. It's definitely just because." (Suko?)

"Really?... but even if you set out offerings, it looks like monsters would eat them, so it's a waste." (Pel)

The Big Eaters Brigade, with a different sense of what to fear compared to humans as expected, aren't scared in the slightest. In this situation they're reliable.

"When ya die in the dungeon, it seems like your grave will just appear by itself. It's a friendly design where even your name is automatically carved on it." (Hyurumi)

Hyurumi isn't agitated at all either. She even has enough composure to casually approach the tombstones and wipe off the dust to check the names.

Mishael has a smile pasted on and doesn't tremble at all. At a glance he appears to be admirably calm without being flustered, but his pupils are staring fixedly at one spot. Did this guy freeze up from being too frightened?

Ramis, with me on her back, is staring only at the ground to keep the damage to her spirit at its minimum, it seems.

"You guys, you're too panicked. Sure it's just a tiny bit gloomy, but that's it. Don't get overwhelmed by the atmosphere." (Leader)

The Brigade members tightened their expressions; the color of their faces aren't by any means good, but they seem to have made up their minds.

Mishael went, 'Ha-', cleared his throat once, and put on his usual at-ease, refreshing smile.

They were a bit agitated, but these guys immediately went back to their usual selves so there's no problems, I guess. Ramis is staring at the ground still, so I can't have expectations for her in a fight, but she can manage if it's just carrying luggage. She can manage, right?

"Haa, well, let's just search as we are able for today."

Leader Keryoil took off his hat in a rare gesture, scratching his head. He's probably disgusted at the fact that our future prospects will be full of hardships, but it's not like I don't understand his feelings.

At this time, if the Big Eaters Brigade turns out to be the most reliable ones, I'd also want to cry.

Going along with Leader's orders, we're walking around the area as we are able, but the enemy encounter rate is quite high. We fought over ten of them just wandering around for about thirty minutes.

While I was analyzing like that, more enemies appeared just now, huh?

The ground bulged up, and from there an arm with rotting flesh, to the point you can see the white bone inside, came sprouting upwards.

Aside from that, there are also arms already reduced to bleached white bone and skulls that pushed up the dirt from within and appeared, but true to expectation they all appeared near a tombstone.

There are eight zombie – corpse demons and bone-people demons in total, but in the span of a single breath, four of them were destroyed by long-ranged attacks, and before the remaining four could pull their entire bodies out of the ground, they were approached by the Big Eaters Brigade and smashed up by the Big Eaters' fangs and claws.

I understand that it's an efficient method to defeat them, but I pity our enemies a little.

Of the scared party, the Fools of Whimsy Brigade's movements were sharp and they fought without any hiccups. Mishael also activated ikemen-mode when it comes to battles, so looks like there are no problems.

That said, the remaining one is Ramis, but when the enemy appears she only stiffens

and holds her breath; she doesn't scream or try to run away, so for me, I think it's quite the progress.

From then on, even though the enemies are easily defeated, Ramis only carried me, seeming to already be giving her all, and didn't participate in battles.

Before it became dusk, we went and returned to the community and quickly withdrew to the inn.

I'm in the usual spot on the outside, spacing out and staring at the starless night sky.

After finding out that the monsters here won't harm me, I have the composure to do some fancy nighttime monster observation. I feel like the atmosphere should have me seated in an expensive-looking chair, wine glass in hand, giving horror film reviews.

Today as well, the monsters repeatedly prowl within the community, peering into the lit up windows. This is just my thoughts after several days of observation, but even though they have expressionless faces, I somehow see them as staring enviously at the things going on inside.

It might not be a baseless rumor that the monsters here are different from normal monsters, using a dead person as the base.

"A-, A, A, Aaaaa"

While I was deep in thought, I heard a voice from very near so I suddenly move my sight to the front.

It had gotten quite close while I was unaware, so I ended up with the plight of seeing its rotted face, with the flesh sloughing off on one side and the eyeball fallen out from a very close range.

A, yeah, from this distance, it's pretty rough. As a bonus, the light shining from my body is illuminating it, so the contrasting shadows are sharp, giving it more impact.

"Don't just appear like that!" -- that reflexive scream didn't happen. I'm bitter towards this body that has the setting for only speaking set phrases even in this situation.

I swallow back the words this body of mind produced that don't match this situation of surprise and terror. I'll just leave it and calm down.



Recovering my calm, shall I observe it closely? What's in front of me is undoubtedly a corpse demon. It's height is short, so it's probably a child.

Does it think I'm strange? It stares at me with its remaining eye while saying, "A- A-." If it's true that a person is its base, then this corpse demon would be a child that lost its life at a very young age and became a demon?

Just thinking so made me unable to consider this corpse demon as a dreadful existence. If the child is staring at me, not to inflict harm on me but out of childish inquisitiveness, then it would be heartless not to pity it, huh?

"Welcome."

"A-A-u, AAAaaa."

When I called out to it, it tilted its head. It looks like that, but the person within might have retained its memories. If that's so, defeating these from now on will be tough. Well, I'm not the one fighting, though.

-tte, hey, don't pat me down. Your rotting handprints are getting all over me. Aa, geez, I'll give you this, so-.

I don't know whether it can drink, but I retrieve and drop the orange juice that even the blonde, pig-tailed young lady favored.

It reacted to the *clang* from the sound of the can dropping, but is it unable to understand anything? Then, I'll use <Barrier> to send the orange juice flying out.

The child corpse demon reacted to the juice that flew by its side, rolling on the ground, and turned to look, its body swaying unsteadily while taking shaky steps, towards the juice.

Looks like it's the type that reacts excessively to sound that's common in zombie movies.

Seizing the orange juice can in both hands and lifting it up, I was just thinking it was carefully looking to see how to open the top but it bit into it. Orange colored liquid flowed out between the gaps of the teeth that easily pierced through the aluminum can and soaked the corpse demon child's body.

And like that, seemingly satisfied to continue to chew up the aluminum can, it disappeared into the darkness. It was an unexpected encounter, but I probably won't meet it a second time. It was a strange night, but I don't have confused or unpleasant feelings about it.



The second day's search ended, and once again I'm spending dusk outside of the inn.

Ramis didn't participate in battle like always, but she became able to properly face forward and watch the battles. Un, just like that, keep doing your best.

"A-u, AAAAAa"

The corpse demons and ghost demons appeared again, huh? Looks like they came once again just to do their late-night prowling.

While I was watching those monsters, there was a figure that walked directly towards me. Is that little corpse demon the same one from yesterday?

The rotted face and the way the hair is falling out looks like it, but I'm not certain. It would have been nice if it had a special trait that was easy to recognize, but it's hard to make distinctions between rotting faces. If it's the same corpse demon, then maybe I can tell if I pull out an orange juice?

When I used the barrier to flick the orange juice outside like yesterday, it found it and once again chewed on the can and left, satisfied. Hm? Did it become attached to me? No, couldn't be.



The night of the third day. It came again... that corpse demon child.

I wonder if it has childish tastes. Even after it became a monster, the residual habits and instincts of a child might remain, even just a little, in that decaying body.

This might not mean anything to it, but I offered an orange juice to that child today as well. I'm not sure what I'm expecting, but I've begun to enjoy the late night interactions

with this child.



The fourth, fifth, and sixth days pass. The search has been going well, so today is the first time we're searching outside the community at night. That said, we're not going more than 10 minutes by foot from the community, so if anything happens we can run and take cover.

I'm apologetic to the corpse demon child who has appeared every night since then. I can't hand over an orange juice to it today. Maa, we're returning tomorrow, so bear with it for a day.

"Hakkon, let me sleep near you today."

Everyone is circled around the fire, but I've been set at a spot a little bit away to avoid the direct flames. In front me Ramis, wrapped in a blanket, leaned her back against me and sat down.

For the entire day today she had endured the scary things and done her best, after all. I can at least happily let her sleep together with me.

"Welcome."

"Thank you, Hakkon."

Her spirit is probably worn out from the extreme tension. Ramis was immediately lulled to sleep.

You've worked hard, Ramis. Let's work hard together tomorrow too.

In order to protect the at-risk Ramis, who's sound asleep, I'll watch our surroundings cautiously. Today's night watch are Mikene and Shote from the Big Eaters Brigade, the relatively reliable combo. And also the Red-White twins, rounding off the line up.

If it's those guys we're on point for both spotting and dealing with enemies, so I could safely leave it to them, but you never know what can happen in this other world. There's no disadvantage to increasing the amount of people keeping watch.

Today no one felt like cooking in this kind of place, so everyone purchased my

products; it wasn't a bad profit.



As midnight approached, around the time when those in charge of keeping watch let down their guard a little, I picked up a faint sound.

“a... aaa-...”

A corpse demon, huh? There's just one, but it seems to be coming this way, since its voice is gradually getting louder.

“Red, should we wake everyone?”

“If there's only one then we'll be fine, White.”

The two from the Big Eaters Brigade are going to continue keeping watch; seems like the Red-White twins are going to deal with the sound that's coming our way.

The two are standing next to me, so I increase the intensity of my light so they can see better.

What came looming from out of the darkness is a little corpse demon... -tte, that one is-!

“A child, huh? It's a bit pitiful, but rest in peace!”

“TOO BAD”

In order to stop Red, who flew out, I yelled with my largest volume setting, but without turning, he thrust his spear into the corpse demon child's stomach.

“What the, Hakkon? What happened, you suddenly yelled.”

Without understanding my meaning, Red looked over at me with a bewildered face, but who cares about that? This corpse demon child, it can't be that one who comes late at night... right?

“What the, the spear tip is caught in something. E, this is, the container for Hakkon's drinks. Where did this guy get a hold of it?”

What his spear pierced through was, without a doubt, was a fragment of the orange juice can.

I understand that getting mad at Red would be misplaced anger. For him, a corpse demon child is just a monster. It's even admirable that he dealt with it quickly, so there's nothing to blame him for.

I understand, I understand, but... when I see that child, with its hand stretched out lying on the ground, my circuits feel like they're shorting.

Surely this child found me and came to get a juice like normal. It's just that, this is all just my speculation, so it might have also come to attack people.

That's right, today it came much later than the normal time. This child is a monster, so attacking people is in its instincts —

“Red, doesn't this have something in its hand?”

When my field of vision flew over at White's words, in the outstretched hand of the corpse demon child was a coin.

“No way, was it going to buy something? No, impossible, na, no way...”

“I don't know if it was this corpse demon, but there was something watching us from far away. It didn't seem to want to make a pass at us, so I ignored it, though.”

The one who intruded on the conversation was Mikene. If its these nocturnal guys with night vision saying it, then they're probably not wrong.

In other words, this child saw my companions buying things with coins and wanted to imitate it and put coins in me...?

You idiot, it would have been fine if you didn't act so much like a child. And what you have is a copper coin, it's not even enough.

Even after the other two lost interest and left, I couldn't keep my eyes off that child.

I turned into the <Coin-Operated Vacuum>, and although it was a tough battle, I sucked up the copper coin, became the usual vending machine, and added orange juice

to my products.

Making it purchasable with a copper coin, I dropped the orange juice and tossed it towards the child.

I offer up my first and last words of gratitude towards that child.

“Thank you very much”

# Chapter 67

## Plans from Now On

When one week since the beginning of the search, Ramis had gotten quite a bit more used to things and has become able to fight everything except corpse demons. Corpse demons look like that after all, so I well understand her reluctance to smash them with her fists.

I, who got attached to corpse demons from the previous matter, am also saved from not watching them get pulverized from point-blank range.

“Leader, you’ve thought of how we’ll deal with the Ghost King if we find it, ya?”

Hyurumi, who has no part to play when it comes to battle and has recently always been in the wagon doing something or other, poked her head out and asked Leader so.

“N, a-, well, yeah. I also want to ask a knowledgeable person like you, though; do you know what kind of monster the Ghost King is?”

Care-freely walking next to the boar-drawn wagon, Leader turned just his head and returned her question with a question.

“That guy, it’s a jumbo-sized skeleton wearing a robe like its decked in gold, a dude with an grand-looking getup. Pretty sure people say it’s the shadows of a former great sorcerer.”

‘Ou, that’s the guy. Wielding a large amount of magic attributes, and possible of rapid-firing vastly powerful magic. Well, they say that in exchange, its body is fragile.”

It’s a completely magic-specialized type, na. Looks like you can win by hitting him with a big one, but it will be a fight to slip through his magic and get near, huh?

Ramis or Mishael would be the most suitable for defeating the enemy through destructive power, I suppose.

“An’? Whatcha gonna do about that magic? This line up doesn’t have a shield or wall.

Maa, even if we did, we're going to be blasted with magic, so they won't be useful."

The shield and wall Hyurumi talked about isn't literal, it's the role that Hunters are assigned to. In other words, it's the person in the team who specializes in taking all of the enemies' attacks while their comrades defeat them.

"Basically. But we've got a guy who can possibly withstand any sort of attack without letting it through, right?"

The one saying that with a wink and a playful expression, throwing a glance over here, is a lazy bearded ossan.

A-, so it's like that. I get it; I've confirmed the reason they brought me along for the search.

"E, is that about Hakkon?"

"Correct, Ramis. Hakkon's Barrier is an all-purpose shield that won't even let magic through, na. Even if you guys close the distance in an instance to defeat it but only manage to draw the enemy's attention, it won't matter."

"That's dangerous... or not. Hakkon has a track record of preventing Level Rulers' attacks. There's also how he defended against the guys aiming for Mishael... the possibility's there..."

Looks like Hyurumi's thinking it over while drumming a rhythm on her forehead with her fingers.

I have a surplus of points so I have confidence in blocking an enemy's attack. As for worrying about whether I'd be blown away by the force of an attack, I'll be carried by Ramis, so there's also the possibility that she'll be able to deal with it by bracing her legs against the ground.

Huh, is this, just possibly, a good idea?

"What do you think, Hakkon? If you think it's impossible than we'll have to revise the plan, but how about it?" (Leader)

If you're asking whether it's possible or not, I suppose it is. It will expose Ramis to dangers, but if I protect her then it's a done deal. Hunters are ones who have chosen



such dangerous work, so if you avoid it just because it's dangerous, then you won't get anywhere for your entire life.

"Welcome."

"O-, as expected of Hakkon. You're a real man." (Hyurumi)

"If Hakkon's fine with it, I don't mind either." (Ramis)

Ramis has faith in me. If that's the case, then answering her expectations is what a man would do. Even though I've become a vending machine, I can't forget my true character.

"Just like its name as a king, the Ghost King seems to bring forth a number of accompanying monsters. Leave the small fries for us to deal with."

The abilities of the Fools of Whimsy Brigade can't be doubted, and neither can Michael's. The Big Eaters Brigade has it tough fighting corpse demons, but they're nimble so they won't get caught by them, and they're strong against the bone-types, so there's no problem.

From what I hear, we're ready to go.

"But this is just what's on paper. Basically, play it by ear. If it gets bad then desert at full speed and throw my instructions out the window."

I don't dislike this style where, rather than fighting to the bitter end even if you die, fleeing is approved of. Whatever you say about the, the Fools of Whimsy Brigade places high importance on the lives of their comrades. That's why, even though they may have complaints, the brigade members like him.

"Mind if I ask another question?"

"You can ask whatever you want, Hyurumi."

"I think is plan ain't bad, but how did all the guys up 'til now defeat the Ghost King?"

A, that's right. This is a plan thought up entirely based on my <Barrier>, but I am curious about how other Hunter Groups did it up until now.

But probing the plan like this with the other members on the other side of the mosquito net<sup>1</sup>, so to speak, she's sticking to the role of the questioner. Normally the Vice-Leader would also join in, but right now it's all Hyurumi.

"Other guys, huh; this is only from what I know, but... through violence and numbers, with many of them ending up as fodder. Or else, I've heard some challenge it with countermeasures completely against magic. For the latter, the plan is similar to ours."

That first group is the ones who made the absolute worst choice. Not knowing your opponent's abilities and challenging it with numbers isn't necessarily wrong, but just how many victims did they have to pay for it?

"We've collected the information about the finer points of our opponent's traits and means of attack, so run your eyes over it. And then teach Ramis and Hakkon about it too." (Leader)

"Un, got it. Hakkon, let's study together later, ne." (Ramis)

"Welcome."

I can't read the words, so I'm counting on you, Ramis. After all this time, I want to learn the other worlds' letters, but I can't think of a way to learn.

The literacy rate of this world doesn't seem to be low, at least I haven't seen the figures of people troubled because they can't read at Seiryu Lake. I've somehow or other made out that the letters have a kind of disfigured alphabet feel to them, but it's difficult to memorize them on my own without a proper reference guide or someone to teach me.

"And that's that. Everyone, properly study it-" (Leader)

"Oka-y."

The Brigade members and the Big Eaters Brigade raise their hands in the air. As always, they have a calming effect.

After this, I'll memorize it well. If I'm able to get my hands on information about the opponent, then I might be able to think of countermeasures from my functions.



“An’ that’s that. Got it?” (Hyurumi)

“Yes, Hyurumi-sensei.”

Hyurumi, who for some reason was wearing glasses with a pointer in hand, gave everyone a detailed explanation about the information we had. Her words are rough in places, but fundamentally she’s an attentive person, so she seems to be popular. She rearranged the information in her head, huh?

When the Ghost King makes an appearance, a number of monsters will appear around him. The amount is random, and it seems that there has been a case where close to fifty of them appeared and surged forth. Let’s make sure not to forget that it’s an immediate retreat on the occasion that there are over thirty.

The main attacks of the Ghost King is magic and he uses the four main elements, fire, water, wind, and earth freely; he’s also proficient in dark magic. He seems to dislike light magic, and also avoids bright places. It might be a possibility to make him flinch by firing off my light at the maximum intensity.

He’s weak against physical attacks and strong against magic. Magical effects don’t work well, so the main way to deal with him is through direct attacks, it seems.

And so, Ramis and I are only supposed to go after the Ghost King without minding the scraps. Ideally, taking the magic and repelling it with <Barrier>, we’ll close the distance at an opportune moment and end him, but in the case that we can’t do that it’s fine for us to just take the enemy’s magic attacks. Hearing it like this, it sounds simple enough, but unlike me, Ramis is a flesh-and-blood person. She’s leaving the defenses to me, so I’ll absolutely protect her with my full strength.

To be on the safe side, everyone is also given healing medicine, and it seems that just smearing a little on a wound will heal it. It helps that this part is fantasy-like.

With this, if we find the Ghost King and fight him, I’ll have fought a Level Ruler three times, huh? What’s with a vending machine having better achievements than a Hunter?

For an otherworld transportation story this would be the ideal development, but as a

vending machine... No, this is a revolutionary plot line. Even if you're a vending machine, you can fully enjoy another world and find fulfilling happiness, huh?

And I'm not just some luggage, I'm useful. I can proudly boast about that, na.

"We have the most important part, so let's do our best!"

"Welcome."

Of course, Ramis. I ended up stealing all the good parts with the previous Level Rulers, but this time we'll stylishly plunge in to defeat the Level Ruler together. I think Ramis should be evaluated esteemed as someone who has good abilities.

For me, it would be ideal if the me and Ramis combo became famous, though.

As she is now, after she's gotten used to this level's atmosphere and her fear has thinned out, I can have expectations for Ramis' participation. We can't become self-assured and negligent, but if we're able to play a participating role and participate in battles, then the danger to our comrades will go down.

"Ramis, don't be gettin' too hyped. If, in the million-in-one chance one of us dies in battle, it ain't gonna be anyone's fault. Everyone agreed to this; don't ya forget that."

So saying, Hyurumi placed her hand on Ramis' head. Her battle power is nonexistent, but she's an indispensable existence when it comes to providing information and supporting the heart.

All the other members nodded their heads emphatically to those words. There isn't anyone who's thinking he wants to die, and no one intending to die. But they've at least prepared themselves for it, is what she means?

I don't want anyone to die, of course. Even a villain has human rights; whatever reasons you have, you shouldn't commit murder. I've never had that sort of desire. I've also never been tormented that unrelated people I don't know of may be dying in completely unknown places.

However, I don't want anyone who's used me even once to die. I understand that with people who do the Hunter job that goes hand-in-hand with danger, this is an unreasonable expectation.

Even so, I wish from the bottom of my heart that all of the people here, without missing a single one, will return to the community and buy my products once again.

“Maa, what will happen will happen; first we have to find the Ghost King. Well then, to put some life in you, shall we drink that fizzy stuff?” (Hyurumi)

“I also fell in love with it after drinking it at the eating contest.” (Ramis)

At Hyurumi’s words, cola was grandly sold, and the cola went to all members.

“Then, should we toast –ssu?”

“Cheers! Open the top... chee-rs!”

“Cheers!”

All of the comrades gathered together in a circle, brought their plastic bottles of cola together, and smiling warmly at each other, they drank the contents.

It kind of has the feel of a certain type of cola’s commercial that I’ve seen before. It wouldn’t be bad if, after this search is over, everyone gathers again to give a toast with cola.

# Chapter 68

## The Battle Begins

“Leader. There’s a report from Red that a Ghost King-like monster has been discovered.”

Thanks to the Divine Blessing that can communicate long distances that the Red-White twins have, we are able to contact Red and two of the Big-Eaters Brigade that have gone out for reconnaissance.

“Found it, huh? Have Red and the others continue to observe it at a fixed distance away. Our side should get hurry up too.”

So this is it. I think I’ll manage after simulating it in my mind many times, but if something happens then let’s dedicate myself to defense.

Dunno what the non-combatant, Hyurumi, is going to do, but she and the boar-drawn wagon are heading to the scene. It’s a covered wagon, but the cover has been taken down and the archer, Shui, is also riding, so she can start her long-ranged attacks from there.

Suko and Pel from the Big Eaters Brigade are also there as guards, so I judge that they’ll be fine. It’s not like we can either leave her alone or return her to the community.

“We’ll get there in about twenty minutes. Steel yourselves.”

To the words of Leader Keryoil, who was riding in the driver’s seat and manipulating the reigns, everyone nodded emphatically.

The ones riding the boar-drawn wagon, that has quite the speed, are the members of the Fools of Whimsy Brigade and Hyurumi; the Big Eaters Brigade and Ramis are running alongside.

This is something I should be used to already, but the speed her super-strength can output while easily carrying me is surprising. If she could come to be able to control

her strength well when she isn't carrying me, Ramis wouldn't lose to anyone in strength, but it seems to be quite difficult to control. There's no other way than to practice over and over and have her body remember it.

"-tto, we're here, huh?"

In the shadow of a rock up ahead are Red and the Big Eaters Brigade's Mikene and Shote. We dropped our speed and approached them as they waved their hands, and for now all members are hiding in the rock's shadow.

"What's the situation."

"Right up ahead is the Ghost King and monsters I think are his subordinates all in one group. There's five corpse demons, five ghost demons, eight bonepeople demons, and four flame-rook-head demons."

An accurate report was the response returned to that question. The number of followers is twenty-two. It's within the scope of the previous plan, but it's a little much.

"It's not like we can't do it, but... it's to the point that I'd like to reduce their numbers first."

"Vice-Leader isn't here, after all -ssu. Although I can take out a few with the bow before we get closer."

A way to defeat them immediately, huh? Because we don't have magic, our long-distance attacks are the bow and Leader's throwing knives. The Big Eaters Brigade has those kind of hands, so it seems impossible for them to use long-distance tools, and Ramis's aim is way too bad.

If I use the water from the <Pressure Washer> then we can extinguish the fire on the flame-rook-head demons, but it doesn't have any effect on the other monsters. Rather, as Red explained, the monsters are in an arrangement surrounding the Ghost King, so we should use those flames. In that case, I wonder how turning into the <Kerosene Meter> and dispensing kerosene to turn it all into a sea of flames would work.

O, this might be an exceptionally good idea. To be safe, using the easily lit gasoline and diesel might be good. <Gasoline Meter> is also properly on the function's list.

“Even though it would be easy once we cleared out the small fries... o-, Hakkon, you thought of something?”

When he saw my changed form, Leader Keryoil widened his eyes. It doesn't feel bad to have expectations placed on me, but the problem is how fast they'll be able to understand how to use this method, huh?

At a glance, I'm just the vending machine body with red, yellow, and green nozzles sticking out. I think anyone who's a Japanese person who's come of age would understand, but for the nozzles, red is regular gasoline, yellow is high octane, and green is diesel.

Ramis, realizing I thought of something, lowered me, who changed my body, to the ground and stared at me. Now then, the problem is from hereon. How do I make them understand?

“This looks like the equipment that shoots water, na; ya don't care if I pull it out?”

“Welcome.”

Seeing through it with just a glance, Hyurumi drew out the diesel nozzle and stared at it in her hands.

“Yah, it's made like the one that puts out water. I feel like if you pull this, somethin' will come out of the tip?”

“Welcome.”

Having previous knowledge about the pressure washer helps a lot.

“Okay if I pull it a bit?”

Of course, that's exactly what I want.

“Welcome.”

Pointing the tip towards a direction with no one in it, Hyurumi pulled the lever. From the tip of the nozzle, clear liquid began to spray out with quite a bit of vigor. Originally it had a safety measure stuck on it so that it won't come out unless it was first in a



tank, but I had disabled it.

“Uwa-, this stinks!”

All the members of the Big Eaters Brigade held their noses and scowled.

Hyurumi released the lever, stuck the nozzle back to its original place, and crouched, beginning to investigate the diesel accumulated on the ground.

“Hakkon, can I touch it? It ain’t poison, right?”

“Welcome.”

Just touching it a bit won’t be a problem. It just gets your hand stinky.

“The smell, this is pretty bad, na. It’s thick to the touch, oil-like. Let’s try soaking paper in it?”

Hyurumi took the paper soaked in diesel and took it a little bit away, then took a cylindrical object – a ignition magic tool out from her breast pocket.

In the past I had thought, shouldn’t I provide a 100yen lighter in this world? But when I found out that there’s a magic tool that replaces the lighter to begin with, I immediately gave up on it.

A flame lit up on the tip of the magic tool, and it was brought close to the paper.

“Uwo-! This is burnin’ like mad.”

Hyurumi observed the burning paper that she had nimbly dropped onto the ground. The paper’s flames are lighting her from below, so Hyurumi’s smiling face is a little scary.

“This, Hakkon, ya tryin’ to say that we should spray this easily burnin’ oil on those guys?”

“Welcome.”

Correct, Hyurumi.

“Then, when I’m plunging in among them, I’ll spray the oil, ne.” (Ramis)

“Yeah... no, wait. There’s another way to use this oil, na. Hakkon, ya mind if we use those bottles that have water in ‘em?”

As for the plan Hyurumi, with a smile spread across her face, had thought of, I also understood. Why, certainly, do as you wish.

“Welcome.”



Our work was done before the Ghost King made any movements, and we made our preparations.

“Alright then, let’s go according to plan. Don’t forget your jobs... let’s go!”

All members leaped out from the shadow of the rocks, Ramis and I are partners so we were a little later, closing the distance towards the Ghost King from the front.

There’s still some distance between, but the opponents have noticed our movements, so first we dashed out to strike at the followers, according to directions.

The monsters separated from the Ghost King, coming towards us in one cluster, so my comrades all threw the plastic bottles in their hands at once. Only, Ramis pulled out the diesel nozzle and pointed it towards our opponents.

When the plastic bottles had reached the airspace above our opponents, after drawing a parabola in the sky, I erased only the bottles, and the contents that had completely filled them – the diesel poured onto the monsters from above.

The flame-rook-head demons’ flames ignited the diesel, and the area became a sea of flames. And, with the diesel gushing from the nozzle being sprayed on top of it, the flames increase in intensity.

Our comrades split and flanked to the left and right of the flames that had suddenly appeared and flared up at once. However, we calmly thrust right into them.

Without allowing flames nor heat nor carbon dioxide to pierce through <Barrier>, we

ran through the middle of the flames in all at once.

The flames are blocking our view, but it's the same for our enemies. On top of delaying the timing, right around now, the forms that are pincering up ahead should be our comrades leaping into the Ghost King's field of vision.

When the opponent looks away after identifying his enemies to be dangerous, we, who plunged into the flames, will leap out.

Bingo-!

There's about 10 meters between us and the enemy. There, there's a skeleton wearing a jet-black robe covered in golden embroidery.

Our opponent is in the middle of firing magic, but when he saw us he changed his target and pointed the cane, made of skeleton arms overlapping, at us.

Magic's coming!

The preparations for <Barrier> are complete. Let me show you that I can block whatever magic it may be with full certainty.

The tip of the can is a cluster of skeletal fists closed tightly, but all of those hands opened, and from them a glint of light spread.

So, lightning-. Electricity-types have the worst compatibility with vending machines. <Barrier>, without allowing a single spark through, repelled all of it and sent it flying. At that moment, I realized that the red lights housed in the Ghost King's eyeball-less sockets shook. Freaked him out, huh?

"My magic was blocked-! That bluish light must be... Barrier, how impudent."

O, the skeleton spoke. It's quite the majestic voice. How does he do it without vocal cords – that kind of retort is dumb, huh? I'm just a vending machine myself, but I have a will, na.

Being able to see through my <Barrier> at a glance means that him formerly being a superior magic might be true.

In the time that his attention was stolen by us, Shui and Leader Keryoil's arrow and throwing knife were released.

"A futile endeavor."

The Ghost King lightly swung his staff and, from both sides, skeletons appeared and flooded in to form a bone wall. And, with another light wave the wall collapsed, but the skeletons weren't destroyed; they landed on the ground and went to attack our comrades.

There were thirty skeletons that formed a single wall. In total there are close to sixty skeletons, so it looks like we can't expect help (from our comrades).

"The girl over there, that box on your back... there's something about it."

"Dunno!"

Ignoring the questioning words, Ramis plunged forward.

From hereon it's one versus one-plus-box. It's the first time we challenged a boss with just the two of us like this. Let's put our fighting spirit into it!

# Chapter 69

## The Power of One Person and One Box

“Oh ice shards, pierce.”

The Ghost King murmured order-like words, and from the tip of his staff, sharp ice filled our vision. I counted up to ten, but gave up on the rest.

“They’re coming!”

“Welcome.”

Don’t worry, because for this kind of thing, I’ll show you that I can block all of them.

<Points reduced by 1; points reduced by 1; points reduced by 1 ->

The points are being reduced every second and when the ice shards make a direct hit. The notifications are flowing through my head like a waterfall.

But I have a lot of points left, so this amount of reduction isn’t a problem.

“Fumu, what a troublesome divine blessing. And that girl there... no, it’s the soul residing within the magic tool behind her, hm? Then fire... was nothing to it. Then blow, devastate, oh wind.”

So after the ice shower is a gale. Even though it looked like we’d reach our enemy in just a few more steps.

The wind blasting from ahead of us gouged out the ground outside of <Barrier> and disappeared behind us along with the tombstones.

Like this, the wind is blocked, but our surface area has been increased due to <Barrier>, and we’re taking the complete effect of the wind.

“Fuhahaha. There are many ways to deal with an invincible Barrier. Now, be blown

away with your Barrier... n?"

The celebrating Ghost King stared at us, mouth wide open.

Within the heavy winds that are blowing layers off the ground, Ramis is consistently moving forward. The wind pressure is definitely amazing, but Ramis is continuing to walk ahead as her feet sink into the ground.

"Why are you not being blown away? What have you done, magic that interferes with Gale?"

Nope, it's just super-strength. She's fighting it with brute force.

"Don't lose to wind or hail, attack squad, destroy, destroy."

Ramis, pushing forward with sheer strength, is muttering dangerous words.

"Not ice, nor wind, nor fire have much effect... then, how about this? Oh earth, wail and scream."

Are those words necessary for the spell, I wonder? I think it's cool, but when I hear them, my heart shudders. Right, I feel like I've returned to a middle school, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, where every boy was afflicted with a certain disease.

-whoops, it's not time to be thinking about stupid things. The ground at her feet cracks open and shudders. And, with a roar, the ground splits in two, and an abyss opens wide its maw.

"W,waita-!"

I can't let Ramis tumble head over heels and fall like that. I form change into the <Cardboard Vending Machine>. With this, it should reduce the burden on Ramis by several hundred kilos.

"Dang yooouu-!1"

Ramis kicked the side of the abyss and flew diagonally upwards, and when she reached the opposite side of the abyss she continued to kick. Repeating that and kicking her way up the wall, it's like a ninja action game.

“There is a delectable human within.<sup>2</sup> Oh maw, close.”

The walls are coming closer and closer, but right before it closed, Ramis’ last kick sent her flying sky high.

“What-!”

He was shocked seeing Ramis souring above the abyss. Right now we’re about 10 meters above the opponent. She did just immediately go flying. With the Ghost King directly underneath, it’s the ideal position.

“Well, for now, ki—ck!”

After reaching the jump’s peak she started a sharp descent, and Ramis fell while taking a kicking pose. That said, Ramis’ weight doesn’t have much power behind it. No matter how much super-strength she has, the power greatly decreases if her body has nothing to push off of.

In order to increase the power of the attack right now, it would be good to increase the weight. A simple matter. And so –.

“As if I would take a kick like that! Greet thine enemy. Come come come, evil from the den beyond the abyss –“

Tch, like I would let you. I changed into the giant vending machine from before. The fall speed isn’t much, but because it increased the timing was shifted, and additionally he was bewildered at my mid-air form change, so we landed on the face of the Ghost King in the midst of chanting his aria.

“Gugo-“

Even I, being carried, can sense the response of something being crushed as the bottom of her foot sunk it.

“Wa- wa-, ooph-!”

Ramis, jumped off the head of the Ghost King that she had stomped on, swayed at her landing, but somehow recovered her posture, then pounded her clenched fist into the

middle of the opponent's body.

Completely at odds with her cute yell, the explosive noise of her strike rang forth, and the Ghost was splendidly bent into a “<” shape and sent flying off at high speed. A, I can see an afterimage.

Flying parallel to the ground, the body of the Ghost King split into two parts; the upper part went soaring into the sky, spinning and revolving upwards, becoming smaller and smaller until it disappeared from sight. The bottom part crashed into the ground and raised a cloud of sand as it tumbled, coming to a stop with the feet pointing towards the sky.

They did say it was weak to physical attacks, but it turns out like this when Ramis hits it at full force, huh? Like I thought, you're really strong, Ramis. If this girl can manipulate this destructive power at will, she will become even stronger.

“Oi oi, you guys finished it all by yourselves?”

The other members also finished defeating the skeletons, so everyone gathered together. Let's return back to the usual vending machine.

Mikene grabbed barely-left skull of the Ghost King that had flown far away and brought it back. Shote dragged back the upside-down lower half.

Over half was annihilated, but the crumbling remains of the Ghost King were collected together.

“This guy is still barely living, na.”

Leader Keryoil approached the skull and looked down on it, but his face looks like he's immediately crush it if there are any strange movements.

“If... you kick... the great... me... you will... die...”

“You're pretty stuck up for being on the verge of death. Won't you hurry up and crumble and become a coin?”

“Coin... fuhahaha... you curs... as if I was just... a level ru”



“Everyone, get back-!”

Leader’s facial expression abruptly changed and he suddenly yelled, kicking away the members near him and leaping back.

The Big Eaters Brigade also raised the “Buaaaaaa-!” yell I hadn’t heard in a while and fled backwards.

I don’t really get it, but activate, <Barrier>!

The instant the blue light enveloped Ramis, my vision was dyed black.

<Points reduced by 500>

W,what!? Our surroundings are completely black!

Points being reduced means we’re being attacked-!

What is this, the Ghost King’s suicide bombing with the last of his strength-?

“Hakkon, what is this!? W,what should we do-!?”

Ramis, that’s what I want to know. Hearing her panicked voice, I regained a little bit of my calm. If I’m flustered then I can’t think of anything; let’s calmly judge the situation.

<Points are reduced by 500>

The reductions aren’t ending. Is this darkness the enemy’s magic or something? From the feeling on the <Barrier>, it’s coming from above?

After enduring the dark torrent for a while, it began to disappear, and we could finally see light. The black downpour seems to have ended. The point reductions also stopped.

“No way... e,everyone”

When the darkness disappeared, there was a giant crater. The place we were at was directly in the middle of the crater, and only the ground below us was left, making the terrain something completely out of common sense.

Our companions... are scattered outside the crater, prostrated on the ground. They’re not dead – I want to believe.

The most likely lost consciousness? Most of them don't move even the slightest, but Leader and Mishael somehow struggled and stood. At the very least, two people have definitely survived.

"Hou, for there to be fellows who can withstand my dark magic."

When I turned my vision upwards to the voice descending from above, there was skeleton about two times larger than the Ghost King floating in midair.

The silver skeleton is wearing a hooded robe, but that robe's embroidery is more elaborate than the Ghost King's, so there's a sense that the skeleton that's wearing it is superior.

"This incompetent disciple. I'll have you return the Arm of The Dead who Cling to Light."

The skeleton floating in the air turned his palm downwards and the ground in the crater bulged; the Ghost King's staff, that had been buried, floated and settled into his hand.

"A superior magic tool made by the hands of superior ones... I can not imagine it to be true, ne? Visitor from another world."

So this shiny silver skeleton saw through my true nature. When he stares at me with the darkness in his eyes, I feel a chill, like he can see through the inners of the vending machine.

I don't know who he is, but it's definite that he's a grade above the Ghost King that we defeated.

"W,who are you, name yourself!"

"Fumu, I've forgotten my name, but there are many who call me the Ruler of the Netherworld. If the Ghost King is any indicator, all of you may also call me the Leader of Trash."

As I thought, he's an upgrade. In this situation, it's over if we make a single mistake. Of our companions, the ones whose life or death is unknown are the Big Eaters Brigade and the Red-White twins. The ones who are struggling to maintain their consciousness

are Leader Keryoil and Mishael. How can I save them? I need to save them.

If I just need to save Ramis, I could just withstand it with <Barrier>. I still have a surplus of points. I also just had a bunch of points flowing in from defeating the Ghost King just now, so I have confidence in my protection.

But I can't save the others. If I could abandon them, then...

"So this is the Leader Ruler's coin? An item of little interest."

With just a crook of his finger the Ruler of the Netherworld had the coin float in front of him, and when he lost interest, it followed gravity and fell to the ground, rolling around.

"W,why would you do this!"

"Why? I'm hunting, what's wrong with that? All of you as well, for your own interests, assaulted the Ghost King, correct? A surprise attack should also be a hunter's strong point, though?"

"Th,that might be true, but"

"The world of the living also has the words, correct? You should not do unto others that which you don't want done to you. Even children know of this."

"B,but this"

"What of it? Where you going to say this is a different matter? Why don't you explain it to me in simple terms. Hm, human?"

This guy, he's messing around with Ramis. He's showing how the strong absolutely has the margin to leisurely deal with the weak. Normally this would be a chance to attack the enemy, but I can't see a single chance of victory.

- 
1. nanou(ooou-!) – It's kind of like an angry, 'what'd ya say?!' reaction, so altered it to fit the situation, rather than just 'whaaaaa?'
  2. hagotae – it means chewy, but... 'chewy human'...It sounds more like a 5yo

talking to a dog. Or conversely, a beast. Anyway, in English it doesn't really give a 'deadly skeleton mage' vibe, nor match how the Ghost King talks. Replaced with 'delectable'.

# Chapter 70

## What a Vending Machine can do

Is there no way I can break through this situation just with my own functions?

Luring the enemy into his self-made crater and suffocating him with dry ice that I washed in previously... that won't have any effect, huh? I can't imagine a skeleton breathing. And besides, if he runs away into midair, just like he is now, then that plan is over.

The food products are meaningless. I can't hope for water or ice to have any effect. As expected, I'll have to give up on the idea of defeating him. I can only think about running.

"Oya, I wonder if I should not become an instructor?"

"As if some snake-tongued dude can seriously give a Q&A sessio-!"

The voice that could be heard suddenly was Hyurumi!

That's right, because the rearguards, Shui and Hyurumi were in the boar wagon at a removed location, they're still fine.

What reached us, as her angry voice continued, were several plastic bottles. They soared in a straight line towards the Ruler of the Netherworld floating in midair. Immediately understanding her intentions, I erased just the plastic bottles, and just like the previous time, the contents splashed onto the Ruler of the Netherworld.

"That flammable oil, hm? Fu-."

Simply muttering in a low voice, the Ruler of the Netherworld activated a wall of wind from his sides. Seems like he's intending to blow off the diesel.

"Don't think so –ssu!"

A flaming arrow, along with Shui's words lit the diesel – – no, the gasoline, in midair.

An explosion of fire occurred before it reached the wind wall.

“Ramis, Hakkon, we’re running now –ssu!”

“Hurry it up!”

At the two’s urges, Ramis kicked the ground and leapt to the edge of the crater. At that time, of course I don’t forget to decrease the weight by become the <Cardboard Vending Machine>.

“Leader, Mishael, get on fast –ssu. We need to leave now!”

The boar wagon had stopped near the two who were struggling to stand, and they’re in the middle of pushing them into the wagon.

“I’ll help too.”

Ramis approached with a single bound and lightly threw the two into the wagon.

“We’re fleeing now!”

“But, everyone else is-“

Without waiting to answer, Hyurumi set off and Ramis also reluctantly followed.

When I shift my line of sight behind us, our comrades are still lying on the ground without any changes. The Ruler of the Netherworld has been blasted with the firey explosion, and for some reason he’s glaring without any movements.

What does this mean; is he letting us go because we’re not worth killing?

As long as we can live, I don’t care about what the reason is. If we can run, it’s fine.

*“I wonder where you are going. Even though I haven’t finished instructing you.”*

The arrogant voice of that skeleton transmitted directly into my brain. This is like the blessing <Telepathy>.

Everyone seems to have heard it, but without turning their heads they raised our speed.

*“My my, have you not been taught to give eye contact and listen properly until the end?”*

*It's troublesome that the youngsters these days aren't aware of basic courtesy."*

He's talking like he's a grandpa from the countryside. If he was just some manners-preaching grandpa like this then there'd be no problems, but when it's this stupidly powerful Ruler of the Netherworld, then the situation's different.

I don't know where he's sending his <Telepathy> from, but if he's just going to talk without attacking, he can continue his monologue as long as he wants, I don't care.

"Are you deserting your comrades, hm?"

Suddenly, without any notice, the Ruler of the Netherworld appeared in the direction we're heading. Life isn't that kind, huh?

Hitting him dead on in a collision like this won't kill our opponent. Hyurumi, who understands this, manipulated the reins to change our course.

"If you aren't capable of speaking, then you aren't anything more than a beast, no?"

I wonder what he's thinking; the staff disappeared, and with both hands free he thrust them forward. I don't really get it, but I have a bad feeling. I deploy <Barrier> at full force and watch closely so I won't miss a single movement.

The fleshless silver fingers close a bit, and in the Ruler of the Netherworld's hand are... Hyurumi and Shui appeared.

"Hyurumi, Shui!"

Why would the two, who had just been in the driver's seat, be there? When I look at the boar-drawn wagon, there is only the wagon with no one there.

The two are being suspended in midair by their necks by the Ruler of the Netherworld. They're flailing their arms and legs, trying to resist, but it has absolutely no effect.

"The girl with the interesting blessing and the magic tool with the otherworlder's soul. I'm quite interested in you two. And so I'll let you live. I have great expectations of your future growth from now on, after all."

"Let them both go-!"

Completely worked up, Ramis leaps towards him. This is where I should stop her, but right now, if I stop her against her will, she will regret it for the rest of her life. I understand that he's provoking her to lure her out, but this is a scene where you have to go!

"Despite understanding the overwhelming difference in power, you're still struggling? Good, good, I quite like your guts. I enjoy the adventure stories of those called heroes the most. And the trigger that causes heroes to grow stronger in order to defeat evil is the deaths of their comrades. I, as a villain, must act accordingly!"

"S,stoouoop-!"

The worst case scenario comes to mind. I, on her back, am the <Cardboard Vending Machine>, so there's no weight. With just a single kick off the ground, she leaps the distance of several tens of meters into the air. Even so...

"Oh pulse, dance into disorder, accept death."

The moment those words left the Ruler of the Netherworld's mouth, Shui and Hyurumi's bodies were engulfed with darkness; those bodies pulsed largely just once.

And then the Ruler of the Netherworld released his hold, and the two fell head over heels.

"Uwaaaaa-!"

Ramis full dash exploded along the ground, blowing up a dust cloud. Closing in over ten meters in an instant, she slid underneath the two falling down, catching them before she crashed into the ground.

"You made it in time. Then, as a reward, I shall return the corpses of these two to you. I'm looking forward to your growth. I will be staying on this level for some time. You're welcome to come any time for revenge."

Saying just this, the Ruler of the Netherworld, carrying his staff, disappeared from the spot.

"Hyurumi, Shui, answer me! Please, please... answer me."



Is she aware of the dangers of slapping their cheeks with all her strength? Ramis is simply standing by their sides, clenching her fist and crying.

They look like they're peacefully sleeping, but seeing Ramis' loss of composure, I know it means that optimistic thought is idiotic.

"Hyurumi, you promised me you'd always help me out, right... Shui, everyone, all of the orphans are waiting for you... that's why, please, really, please"

'God fucking dammit... my comrade, dammiiiiit-" (Keryoil)

"I, I, once again, right in front of me -" (Mishael)

Was the boar-drawn wagon coming back towards us? From there are Mishael and Leader's anguished voices.

Michael is somehow supporting himself on one knee, leaning on his sword, but blood is flowing from where he's biting his lips.

Barely able to move, Leader leapt off the wagon, stripped off Shui and Hyurumi's armor and clothes, and began to give Shui a heart massage.

"Ramis! You also learned how to deal with cardiac arrest at the Hunter Association, right!? Don't just space out!"

"R,right!"

Ramis set me to the side and, taking extreme care not to put too much strength in, she began to give a heart massage.

Move, I beg of you-!

She has a nasty mouth, but Hyurumi always supported Ramis like an older sister. She's an important person who tried to understand me.

And Shui; cheerful, a big eater, and someone who wears her body out with Hunter activities for the sake of the orphanage.

These two are, currently, before our eyes, experiencing organ failure.

'It's no good, they're not breathing-!"

Ramis' anguished cry reverberates across the barren land.

Can we only give up? Is there really nothing we can do but except their deaths... not

yet-! No, it's still too early to give up!

That guy, he said, "Oh pulse, dance into disorder, accept death." The bodies of these two look like they're just sleeping, without any external trauma. If I can believe Leader Keryoil's judgment, they're only in a state of cardiac arrest. If that's the case, then there's still hope of saving them!

I immediately select the function that I've set my eyes on previously and acquire it.

A little right from the center of my vending machine body, a clear door is installed, and within it an orange object appears. Next to it is a picture of a red heart and the letters AED.

The new function I chose is the <AED>. THE AED is the automatic external defibrillator; in other words, it's a medical device that gives a person with cardiac arrest an electric shock in order to revive them.

Recently there have been reoccurring disasters, and vending machines have begun appearing with simple toilets and AEDs installed. And thanks to that, I'm able to gain the function like so.

If those two are in that kind of situation, then I'll trust that it's possible to revive them by using this!

"E, what is this, e-"

Ramis, who realized my change, doesn't stop her hands and although she sees me, with tears ceaselessly falling from her eyes, she doesn't understand a single thing. Well yeah, there's no way an other world person will understand just by looking. Even a Japanese person who understands what it is would hesitate.

Resuscitating a person undergoing cardiac arrest is a race against time. You don't have time to hesitate!

I have no way to explain it to her, so leaving it to Ramis is impossible. There's a set of instructions inside the case, but time is required to understand how to use it just from that.

How many points do I have left... 1,220,000 left-! If it's that, it's enough!

I was able to save so much from the points from participating in the defeat of the Ghost King and the hard labor of steadily saving up my earnings, as well as receiving the

compensation for the flaming-giant-bone demon's coin.  
The ability I'm taking now is... <Telekinesis>.

The abilities of this blessing is <You are able to manipulate objects within 1 meter around you. However there are limitations to wait, and it is restricted to products only.>

It's unknown whether the AED is included as a product, but I have no other methods. This isn't reason enough to hesitate!

Spending 1,000,000 points and gaining <Telekinesis>, I look at the AED while strongly concentrating. When I did so, the clear door opened and the AED came out. Right now they're floating in midair.

Alrightalrightalright – we've broken through the first obstacle!

Next is to take the contents of the case out. Place the yellow device on the ground, then stick the electrode pads on the victim's chest... dammit, it won't reach. The 1-meter limitation is going to be a barrier here-?

"Hakkon, you're doing somethine, ne. Is it, is it, I can't really think it's true, but can you revive them?"

"Welcome."

I affirm the words she spoke without any expectations, and Ramis' eyes widened.

"R,really – um, you're going to do something with those rectangular things attached to the cords, right? Um, um, I wonder if it would be better to move you closer to them."

"Welcome."

"Un, got it!"

She's doing well with her ability to deal with things and guess, but for me, who's frantic, I felt it took too much time. Calm down; even though Ramis is falling into a light panic, she's thinking hard, and now she's moving me.

Even if I'm alone, I should deal with it calmly. I understood all that when I had decided to use the <AED>. Now it's just to do it.

"I've brought you here!"

My body was brought to a distance where I'm lined up, practically touching the two. It will reach like this. First... Sorry Shui, but I'm going to revive Hyurumi first.

The electrodes should be at the top of the right breast and at the bottom of the left flank, right? I stuck them to those two places. With just this, the AED will automatically do a cardiogram and determine whether an electric shock is necessary.

["Please do not touch the body. A cardiogram as being performed."]

There's a voice guide, so as long as you're Japanese, anyone can manage it.

["An electronic shock is required."]

"Who's speaking... I can't understand it."

So this Japanese isn't translated? Probably because it's not a voice from the main body. As the voice speaks the charging begins, and when it's done, ["Please push the shock button."] the Japanese voice spoke once again.

Now I just need to push the red shock button installed, and I can't hesitate. After this, I absolutely have to do Shui too. As the time in cardiac arrest lengthens, the probability of resuscitation lowers... I'm pushing it, no, wait, in order to raise the probability or resuscitation, there's something else I can do.

In order to raise the probability by even a little bit, I pull up my Dexterity Status. The effect of Dexterity is still unknown, but if this raises the effectiveness of abilities and functions even by a little, then I won't regret the points.

I raised it by 10, 20, 30, 40; the points have been reduced by 100,000, but it's still within a reasonable range. Alright, I'm pushing the shock button!

["The electric shock has been applied. It's fine to touch the body."]

The body twitched with the electric shock, but I can't be relieved. It's no more than the phenomenon that happens when electricity runs through. The problem is from here on out.

"Hyurumi... A-, she, she's breathing-! Hyurumi, Hyurumiiii-!"

"Seriously-!? Then, Shui too..."

Thank god, seriously, Hyurumi, thank god. Seeing Ramis, who continues the heart massage while crying, I'm so relieved I almost drop my electric supply, but not yet. It's too early to be relieved, with Shui left.

E-, what, I'm able to move the electrodes a lot more delicately than before. Is this the benefit of increasing Dexterity? Like this, it won't be difficult to put the electrodes in the correct spots.

Having had Hyurumi as a prior experience, the result of performing the electric shock on Shui... the two of them are breathing again.

A,alright-! I,it worked out somehow. HAAAAaaa.

"Shui, you made me worry, you dumbass... Thank you, Hakkon. You're her life's savior, seriously, thank you."

Even though he has a huge wound, to where it wouldn't be surprising if he collapsed, he stroked Shui's head tenderly and bowed his head deeply towards me.

Leader Keryoil and the Fools of Whimsy Brigade; let's trust them a little bit more. Leader's actions resonate within my heart as I think that.

# Chapter 71

## After the Massacre

“E, everyone else!”

After the two’s breathing returned, Ramis’ tear-stained face completely changed and she leapt out. That’s right, these two are safe, but the other members haven’t moved at all.

I want to think they’re alive, but I can’t determine anything from here. Can I not do anything but wait for Ramis to bring them here... can I do nothing but pray?

Ramis rushed over to our companions at an unbelievable speed, and I can see her checking the state of their wounds and their breathing. Even though there are times where she pats her chest and sighs, muttering to herself, it’s impossible to understand the situation from this distance.

It’s frustrating, but I can’t do anything but wait for her to come back.



“Somehow, no one’s life is in danger...”

Looking at all the members sleeping, lined up on the bath towels I provided, Leader Keryoil let out a sigh of relief.

There were some serious wounds among the ones who were blasted, but the healing potions and emergency first aid seems to have been effective. Right now, Ramis is carefully carrying them to the wagon.

The wounds aren’t fully healed, and there’s also the possibility of internal trauma, so even if it’s slightly inconvenient, there’s a necessity to return to the community as quickly as possible.

Hyurumi and Shui have been sleeping since then, so the girls were also loaded onto the wagon.

“Sorry Mishael, but looks like you and I have to take turns to drive the wagon.”

“It’s fine. Thanks to the healing potion, I’m feeling quite fine.”

That’s what their saying, but the color of the faces of these two isn’t good, and you can tell they’re far from being in perfect condition. They’re probably very aware that this isn’t a situation where they can show their weakness.

It would be nice if there were pain killers and medicine among the vending machine products, but I’ve never seen medicine being sold in vending machines, due to the pharmaceutical laws. I’ve heard there’s some over seas, but when I was alive, I wasn’t affluent enough to take a vacation abroad just to see vending machines that sold medicine.

Taking care not to shake the wagon as much as possible, the boar-drawn wagon departed. The greatest reason we’re in a hurry is for those people’s recovery. But there’s also the reason that we’re suspicious of that guy... the Ruler of the Netherworld whimsically coming back.

When we reached the community, our comrades were carried over to the only clinic on the Lamentations of the Dead Level.

When they had received the appropriate treatment and the specialist in charge had given a written confirmation that they would be alright, Ramis and I were so relieved we collapsed on the floor.

But the two who had their hearts stopped once required peaceful rest, and the other members weren’t only damaged in body by that dark magic; it seems their spirits were also wounded, so they won’t return to their original states in just a few days, it seems. At worst, they would need to be hospitalized for over a week, looks like.

So that’s the situation, but we can’t just leisurely rest while waiting for our companions’ recovery. The appearance of the Ruler of the Netherworld had to be reported to the guild, and this level’s Guild Master summoned the relatively more lightly injured Leader and Mishael and an emergency meeting was called.

Within half a day, our Bear President and presidents from the other levers came, reconfirming the weight of the matter.

Furthermore, before the day ended, the citizens of this level were prohibited from going out, and hunters were beginning to gather in the community one after another.

Ramis was called to the meeting multiple times to tell what she had witnessed, but the expressions of the presidents weren't good.

Ramis and I were on standby, assembled in front of the Lamentations of the Dead Level's Hunter Association, staring blankly at the gloomy sky.

"What do you think, Hakkon? I'm relieved it ended with no one dying, but that Ruler of the Netherworld is too strong."

"Welcome."

It was a massacre with overwhelming magic power. I can't think of a way to win, nor how resist.

I'm useless against opponents who are smart and act frivolously. I was made to realize that it was luck that I had defeated all the level rulers up til now.

While I was filled with hate and vengeance towards the killing of my companions, my mind had been filled with nothing but how to kill the Ruler of the Netherworld, but as time passed I became calm, and was able to understand the reality.

"That four-armed skeleton, just what is he? I've never heard of the Ruler of the Netherworld. If it's Hyurumi, she might know."

It's an existence that has the Ghost King, a level ruler, as a subordinate. I also want to know exactly who he is.

"So you want to know who the Ruler of the Netherworld is?"

When I moved my line of vision towards the stern voice that came from above, President Bear was there, tiredly massaging his forehead with his pawpad. He was wearing a pince-nez, carrying a stack of papers in one arm.

"President Bear, is the meeting over?"

"Aa, for now. Well, there's content that involves you. Hakkon too. We'll go over the details inside."

Even though he had just left the association, he turned on his heels and beckoned



towards us. We're curious about the content he talked about, and there's no reason to refuse, so Ramis lifted me onto her back and then chased after him.

President Bear lightly pushed the solemn looking doors in the back of the first floor, and behind them was the meeting room with a large, round table.

"Sit down in a free spot, Ramis."

Moving towards the nearest chair, Ramis set me down and sat directly next to me.

It wasn't just us there; Leader Keryoil, Mishael, and nine other men and women I hadn't seen before had already taken their seats.

"I don't have to explain these two, na. The other members are each of the levels' Hunter Association Presidents and their proxies."

Is that so? There are also people with the appropriate presence to be called a President, but there are also people who look no different from Ramis' age; so that means they became Presidents at that age?

-tto, excluding my acquaintances, all of them are covering me with inquisitive looks. I'm already used to this feeling.

"Everyone, this girl and this magic tool person are survivors against the Ruler of the Netherworld. The plan this time greatly involves these two, so I have specially called them."

"President of Clear Lake, is this magic tool the rumored box you can purchase strange things from with money?"

A girl in full youth wearing a red woman's suit spun a fountain pen with her fingers, staring at me.

"Aa, President of Starting. Aside from that, he possesses very useful abilities, and has helped us out many times."

So the Presidents go by their levels' names. Although I think President Bear fits way better than President of Clear Lake.

"I see; sorry for diverting the topic. That was all."

“Fumu. Then let’s continues the conversation. The Ruler of the Netherworld who appeared this time is almost certainly the Ruler of the Netherworld who is the Left Hand General of the Demon King’s Army.”

“Oooo-.”

The Presidents make a ruckus. The way they’re acting surprised looks like it’s some drama, where everyone knew it, but they’re acting surprised again.

“Um-, what’s the Left Hand General of the Demon King’s Army?”

With her hand timidly raised in the air, Ramis asked a question. That’s something I also want to know. Nice assist.

“There are naturally people who don’t know, na. In a place far to the north, there is a man who rules a country, calling himself the Demon King. We’re not sure how many generals the Demon King’s Army has, but they’re called different names depending on their position. The Demon King himself is the Head, and his subordinates are treated as his hands and feet. In order from highest to lowest, there’s the Right Hand General, the Left Hand General, Right Foot General, and Left Foot General, these four people are the Limb Generals, and below them are another twenty fingers and toes generals in relation.”

In other words, this world’s Demon King is accompanied by a number of generals. And the Ruler of the Netherworld is that two down from the top, the Left Hand General. That’s quite a high-ranked person. Really, why did the Demon King’s Army Number Three come to this kind of place?

But, well, there’s a Demon King, huh? If it wasn’t this world, saying that would be strange, but the Demon King, huh?

“Why the Ruler of the Netherworld appeared in this kind of place is unknown, but analyzing the conversation at the scene, the this level’s ruler, the Ghost King, seems to have been the Ruler of the Netherworld. As you are aware, a level ruler is an existence that is unable to leave the dungeon.”

Is that so? First I’ve heard of it.

“It’s said that this level gathers the souls of the dead and turn them into monsters. The

Ghost King is a former human or demon person who died and whose soul was gathered, becoming the Ghost King... is a possibility. Of perhaps there was another way for him to enter the dungeon. This is all pure supposition, though."

So there might be that kind of situation. Certainly, from what the Ghost King and Ruler of the Netherworld said, there was a boss-subordinated relationship, with the Ruler of the Netherworld having a superior-like way of speaking.

"Well, I suppose it would be fine to look into the things we don't understand once everything's over. The problem is how we should deal with the Ruler of the Netherworld, who seems to be staying on this level for a while yet."

"Can I say something, President of Clear Lake?"

"What is it, President of Scorching Heat?"

The one who stood up and raised his hand to state his opinion is a man with gold-colored skin and black tea colored hair who is obviously a hot-blooded man.

His clothes are a Hawaiian shirt-like tunic with flames painted on it, and trousers the color of desert sand. He's a man who feels like he'd match a summer day at the beach.

"Let's say the Demon King Army's top is planning something; is this okay? Even if we defeat him, there's gonna be lots of problems in the future, right?"

"There's probably no worries there. In the first place, they'd be waging war from all the way over there. If the Demon King Army is scheming against us, they're limited to a surprise attack. Rather, moving out with fewer people would be better, but if the Demon King Army directly invaded this place, they'd have to first destroy the Defensive City and the Empire. I'm thinking that this time's incident is most likely the independent actions of the Ruler of the Netherworld."

I don't know the geography of this world, but basically, to the north of this country with the labyrinth in it is the Empire, and on the border of the Demon King's Army is something called the Defensive City, and if they don't do something about those, it's impossible for them to invade this far.

"And so, why would the Ruler of the Netherworld take these independent actions?"

“President of Starting, that is something I wouldn’t know. But there are things humans don’t understand about dungeons. Until the day that we break through the levels – – let’s stop with the theorizing.”

It’s troublesome if politics gets wrapped up in this, but it looks like it would be fine if we ignored it. No, actually, if things end up coming to negotiations and reparations, it might be a good thing for the people here.

“So what’s the plan for dealing with this?”

“It will have to be subjugation. As we are the ones managing the interior of this dungeon, and as he laid his hands on one of the members of the Hunter Association, we can only strike and crush him with all our strength.”

President Bear stated his opinion with the air of a calm gentleman, but you get the feeling that there’s a strong, wild light in his eyes. This time, with his friends, the Fools of Whimsy Brigade and the Big Eaters Brigade being done in, it seems he can’t suppress his anger.

“Ain’t you strangely up for it. But you’re right, na. It’s the duty of Hunters to defeat monsters. If we let him make light of us like this, we’d be going against our trade. There’s a bunch of decently skilled Hunters at my place who can participate.”

“The Starting Level can also send out a number of groups.”

The discussion ended with talk about sending skilled Hunters from the other levels, and the meeting was adjourned. It seems like this is going to be quite the large-scaled battle.

If it’s a crew of highly skilled Hunters, they might be able to topple that monster.

“Ramis, Hakkon, Leader Keryoil, and Mishael. You’ve been put through some trouble. It’s something that everyone is aware of. And so, I have a question for you. Do you have the will to participate in the subjugation of the Ruler of the Netherworld?”

“Damn straight. All our members ended up like that, there’s no way I’m letting him off.” (Keryoil)

“I would also like to be allowed to participate. It was a battle that made me fully understand my insufficiencies. Absolutely allow me to redeem myself!”

Leader Keryoil and Mishael aren't despairing at all. If anything, the flames of their fighting spirit have been fanned.

When I turned my vision to Ramis, who hadn't spoken since the meeting began, she lifted her downcast face vigorously. There wasn't any fear or hesitation on her face; it was filled with determination.

"Of course I'll participate! He hurt everyone, made Hyurumi look like that... I won't accept it unless I hit him once! Right, Hakkon?"

"Welcome."

Yeah, exactly, Ramis. We'll show him our strength.

"I've received your burning determination. I will provide talented people related to Clear Stream Lake's Hunter Association. Let's cooperate with them to defeat the Ruler of the Netherworld."

So saying, President Bear extended his fist and bumped it with everyone else. Only I was thinking, if only I had an arm for these times.



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